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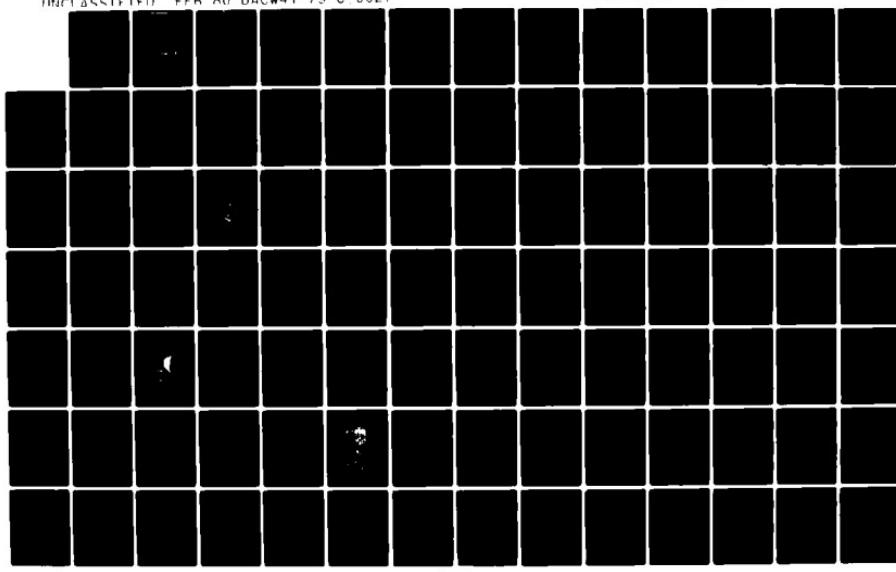
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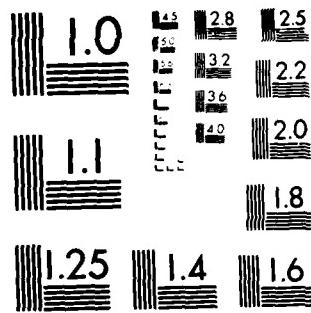
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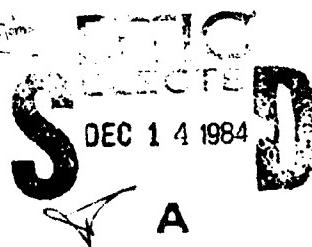
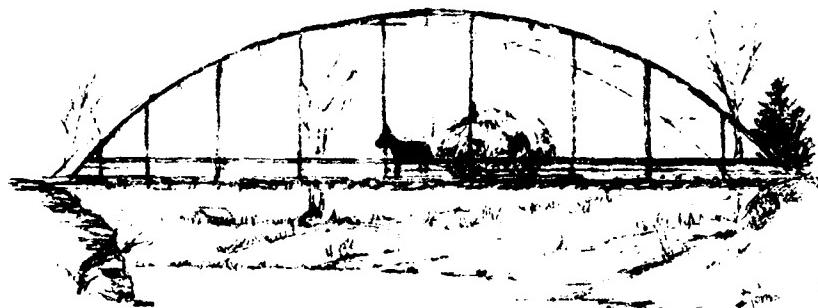
SMITHVILLE LAKE HISTORICAL RESOURCES MITIGATION PROGRAM: ORAL HISTORY

AD-A148 535

By

Craig and Ruthi Sturdevant

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Prepared for

KANSAS CITY DISTRICT
U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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**SMITHVILLE LAKE HISTORICAL RESOURCES
MITIGATION PROGRAM: ORAL HISTORY**

Submitted to
**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Kansas City District
In Accordance With
Contract Number DACW41-79-C-0027**

**Environmental Research Center
Jefferson City, Missouri
February 1980**

ABSTRACT

(Mo.)

This study represents an interpretive social history, encompassing the first three quarters of the twentieth century, which is primarily directed toward the areas to be specifically affected by the Smithville Lake and Dam Project. The data sources are twenty-six long-time residents of the immediate impact zone who possess memories of life along the Little Platte River. Utilizing quota sampling selection, the respondents were interviewed and the recorded tapes were then transcribed. The following report organizes the responses in terms of topics covered by the informants, selection of which is primarily a result of the extent of data recovered in the represented categories.

Topics, Floods, Births, Deaths, Families, Survey
of Land, History, and Social Life

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INTRODUCTION

Residents of the area most directly affected by the Smithville Reservoir project are exemplary of many people from small midwestern towns. Their experiences, ideas, and interpretations of events are included in the Smithville Reservoir Oral History Report. This collection of information, as required by the Scope of Work supplied by the Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, considers only events which have occurred within the lifetimes of the interviewees and, thus, covers essentially the period from the turn of the century up to the present. Further, it represents an interpretive history of the area as participants were asked to give their memories regarding places and events. No published material was considered or utilized in the actual composition of the submitted report.

Many members of the population have descended from settlers who migrated to the project area in the mid-1800's, and the region has been primarily farm oriented until recent years. Relatively small acreages were passed down to heirs, and some of the land which will be covered by the lake has remained in the same family for generations. Changes in the population have occurred recently as long time residents have sold their properties to the government as well as to younger people.

The agrarian community, as described by those who were interviewed, was close knit. The towns in and near the project area, Mecca, Paradise, Trimble, Plattsburg, and Smithville, existed mainly through support of the farm trade. From the beginning of the twentieth century, the towns were connected to larger metropolitan areas by the railroad. Shipments to and from the project zone depots consisted primarily of livestock and feed.

Deriving their subsistence from the land, farmers created assistance networks so that periodic large-scale jobs, such as threshing and butchering, were performed with group effort. Entertainment was also group oriented. Schools and churches were of major importance to the social life of the area besides fulfilling their primary functions. Towns were not merely trade centers because trading itself was incorporated into the social scene. Life in the area epitomized the concept of being neighborly.

A strong unifying influence was exerted by the Little Platte River. Recreational aspects of the nearby water drew groups of people, especially children, to the river in their spare time. Floods resulted in the merging of forces as residents banded together to combat the effects of a common threat.

Inhabitants of the Smithville Lake region have witnessed many transitions over the years. While nearly everyone survived the Depression, they watched the economic turmoil begin the decline of many of their towns. The same progress which brought modern conveniences altered the social system. Modern machinery did the work

which once required large groups of people. Automobiles and roads made the excursions to Kansas City, which once were rare and exciting, everyday occurrences. Work, trade, and entertainment, which had centered around the community, shifted to become individual endeavors often satisfied outside the area.

Not only have farming methods changed, but as small farms have been purchased and incorporated into larger acreages, the scale of farming operations has been altered. The number of small family farms has decreased. Sales of land to the government and to developers and promoters have brought new people to the area. Old-timers who once knew everyone's name and address now see unfamiliar faces.

Despite the transitions they have observed, the older residents still maintain contact and support for each other. Their farms may be sold, television may have supplanted school programs, supermarkets and combines may have removed the need for neighborhood butchering and threshing scenes, and swimming pools and ice arenas may be substitutes for river waters; however, the ties between people, which were established in their youth, have remained unbroken.

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out from March 1979 through February 1980 under a contractual agreement between the Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, and Environmental Research Center. The general Scope of Work states:

2. Scope. a. This study will be undertaken to partially mitigate the effects of water resources development on historical resources in the project area. In order to collect ethnographic data on historical sites, interviews and transcriptions thereof shall be conducted with approximately twenty-five (25) local persons known to possess extensive knowledge of historic events significant to the project vicinity.

Further,

3. Study Approach. b. Problem Orientation. (2) states: The basic goal of the study shall be the collection of data about historic sites obtained through systematic interviewing of people, with the intention of preserving their memories about the ways in which people have lived in the Smithville project area.

The methodology developed to satisfactorily fulfill these requirements entailed three major considerations: (1) Sample Selection, (2) Interview Schedule/Content, and (3) Editorial method. The following section describes the manner in which the present study was carried out under these major headings.

(1) Sample Selection: Prior to actual initiation of the data collection procedures, the Project Director and the Principal Interviewer spent several days in the project area in order to become acquainted with the people and the general environment. Preliminary questioning of local residents and business persons indicated that many of the older residents had already moved from their past project zone locations. Further investigation indicated that several would not be available for the study. As a result, random and other systematic sampling procedures had to be ruled out since there was no means of adequately describing the study population. The sampling procedure utilized was a nonrandom quota technique which focussed on a segment of the general population in and around the project area. The category was defined as persons who had lived within or had directly utilized or frequented various portions of the impact zone for at least thirty years. It was assumed that these respondents would be those most knowledgeable of pertinent events. Further, racial composition of the area in the past required ethnic consideration in the quota sampling technique.

Beginning with a short list of names supplied by the Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, several persons were briefly interviewed in terms of whom they considered potentially

knowledgeable informants under the requirements of the study scope and goal. When names of potential informants were suggested in at least two or more unrelated situations, those noted were listed as possible depth interview respondents. The individuals were then contacted by telephone, in most instances, and asked if they would allow themselves to be interviewed. With very few exceptions, those persons contacted were receptive to the study and gave freely of their time and information. In this manner, twenty-six persons were interviewed and are represented in the edited report.

(2) Interview Schedule/Content: In order to best utilize designated data recovery time, several preliminary steps were initiated prior to the interview procedures. (a) An historical consultant reviewed Smithville and Plattsburg newspapers from the turn of the century on for information about potentially significant events within the impact zone. (b) The Corps of Engineers', Kansas City District, Cultural Resources Survey of Smithville Lake, Missouri Volume 2:History by Dennis Shockley and supplied by the Corps to Environmental Research Center was reviewed by all personnel involved in the project. (c) Persons familiar with the recorded history of the area and those acquainted with a large number of the people in the Smithville Lake region were briefly interviewed. The information derived from these procedures was condensed into several categories, such as the river, towns, farming procedures, businesses, the chautauqua, etc., from which questions were drawn during the actual interviews of the sample of respondents. Interviewees were first asked to discuss their family background and first memories of the area. This was followed by questions from the above mentioned list, emphasizing those areas which specific persons seemed to be most knowledgeable about. In some instances, such as sorghum making, operating the first movie house projectors, etc., only one of the sample interviewed could supply specific information. In other instances, such as the chautauquas, the river, towns, the race tracks, etc., most of the people interviewed contributed information. Interviewees were asked to sign the "Consent. . ." form supplied by the Corps. Photographs of the people who contributed to the study were taken following the interview component of the project.

(3) Editorial Methodology: Two major goals governed the type of editorial method utilized in this report. To present ideas and information on specific subjects, interviewee comments were grouped together rather than isolated in separate transcripts. As the linguistic characteristics of the community are as much a part of the cultural heritage as the historical accounts provided by those interviewed, every attempt was made to preserve the local dialect in the text of the report.

After thorough review of all transcripts, certain topics of general knowledge, interest, or experience were apparent. Various occupational and recreational activities had been shared by many or all of those included in the sample. Each transcript was indexed according to these subjects, and relevant material was organized for inclusion in the report. As each individual had his or her own insight and knowledge about the specific subjects, most statements were collected and incorporated into the text. All

questions and comments by the interviewer were deleted. The intention was to present the clearest discussion of each topic in a readable fashion.

Punctuation within quotations was a function of the editorial method. Every statement represented some part of an entire interview; therefore ellipses were not used at the beginning and end of the speakers' comments concerning a given event. Portions of the interview where the interviewee was essentially "thinking out loud" were frequently omitted. Similarly, repetitious comments and statements unrelated to the subject under consideration were also removed. The ellipsis symbol, "...", was inserted only when a part of a complete sentence was deleted within a quotation.

Interpolation was necessary in certain cases. As all statements were taken out of the context of the entire interview, identifying or clarifying remarks were occasionally needed. Where strings of single sentence responses were grouped to form a longer quotation and/or where the interviewer's contribution was required to complete the meaning of the statement, paraphrasing was also used. Interpolation was indicated by use of parentheses, "()". Where the speaker was not identified in the editorial comments preceding the passage, his or her name was enclosed in parentheses at the end of the quote.

Some statements, while germane to the subject, were parenthetic in nature. To avoid confusion between editorial intrusions and the speakers' own wording, parenthetic expressions were separated from the rest of the sentence by dashes, "--".

In general, no attempt was made to transcribe interviews phonetically; therefore phonological features of the local dialect were not preserved in the report. The only exception to this practice was in the transcription of names of people and places. If the interviewee did not spell or did not know the spelling of such items, they were transcribed phonetically. Apologies are made for all misspellings resulting from this method. The editorial approach did, however, endeavor to maintain the lexical and syntactical characteristics evident in the speech patterns of the community. A linguistic trait shared by most dialects of American English is the tendency not to talk in complete sentences. Sentence fragments, understood subjects, and long strings of clauses joined by conjunctions were found in every transcript. Subjectless sentences were left unmodified unless a noun was needed for coherence. For readability, groups of connected independent clauses were divided into shorter sentences by deletion of conjunctions. Removal of the linking words was not considered a deviation from the local dialect as usage of this sort is a fairly universal albeit unconscious linguistic feature.

In keeping with the scope of work, passages in which the interviewee provided personal anecdotes which, while interesting, were not related to events shared by the community were omitted from the report. Further, statements taken from printed material or from stories which the speaker had heard but had not actually experienced himself or herself were usually deleted.

Throughout the report, the editorial procedure aimed at providing lucid descriptions of every activity or event as seen from the speakers' individual perspectives and as expressed in their own words.

THE RIVER

The Little Platte River, which flows through the project area and which created the need for the Smithville Dam, represents a common bond for all the long-time inhabitants of the area. As adults, the local residents have been drawn together by the frequent times of crisis when the river escaped its banks. In their younger years, those who lived along the banks of the Little Platte utilized it for many hours of recreation. The river has had a major impact on the lives of all who have lived close to it.

Our life was the river. We lived on the river, I, my dad, and Shorty after he came home from the service. At the time we lived there then, we built the house there, and we lived there then, and they fished the rivers. They fished in the boats, Big Platte River and Little Platte River. We knew every crook, every cranny in the river. The river was a big part of you. There's something about it, that's what he told me when I refused to go home this winter. He said, 'Living along that river does something to you. You can't ever get over it.' Even though it has become disastrous, there's something that's just there that you can't get rid of (Marjorie Harris).

Water sports were popular diversions during all the seasons of the year.

I remember we used to fish in the old creek down there, and we would go swimming down there all the time. We would skate, swim, and fish in the Little Branch (which is) what they called it at that time (Ora May).

I lived on the river out by the cemetery when I was 10. I guess that was when we moved closest. I lived out on Bush Creek when I was smaller. We were on that water, a little old body of water the same out there, ice skating in the winter, in it--with its leeches and all--in the summer. That was our swimming hole (Marjorie Harris).

Oh, we had lots of fun around there. There were lots of boys. A lot of people lived in the bottom there then. (There were) a lot of little two-room houses. We played games. Of course, we would go swimming pretty near every day in hot weather. Right down on the creek, you know. In the wintertime, then there was skating, (we) just generally had a good time (Reuben Ross).

Warmer months found many of the local youngsters in the river.

I learned to swim in that 'old river,' as Anna Miller called it. Every time we would get together, Charlie was our ring leader, he was a couple years older than Henry and I. I would go by there, and we would get together; and, Anna would caution us, 'You boys stay away from that old river, Charlie.' Charlie would say, 'Okay, Mammy.' Of course, we was headed for the river then. There was a hole down there that we always went to down below the bridge. There was a rocky ford there at the 'U,' rock bottom in 1910 when we moved here, where the old ford was right below the bridge. It was too shallow there to swim much; so, we went around down around the bend. There was where we did most of our swimming. Many a Sunday a bunch of the McGee boys and the Daleboys, Reuben Peterson, Benson boys, Porter boys, all of us got together on Sunday and went swimming. (If) somebody wanted to get out, you didn't get out, you got muddled till you would have to come back in and stay in the water all evening long. You would be so darn weak you couldn't move by the time you would get out (Eugene Arthur).

Swimming attire was somewhat different from what is required at modern day pools.

We just had on a shirt and a pair of overalls. We would step out of them and jump in. Of course, there use to be five or six of us, you know (Reuben Ross).

Similar games were played in all the different swimming holes. Discouraging those who wanted to go home was a favorite sport.

We had an old stump out there. The water was over your head in one place. You would climb out on that stump and dive off. Then if one of the boys got tired, and he was ready to go out, why he would wash off good, you know. (He would) get up on the bank and put his clothes on, and one of us would hit him with a handful of mud. That would start something. Well, he would have to jump back in and wash off. Well, maybe it wouldn't be long till somebody else would have to get out, and it would be the same story. It would take quite awhile to get everybody organized (Reuben Ross).

Without the slides, diving board, and other equipment in use today, the swimmers had to be inventive.

We had a place that run back up the road on the creek bank, what you call a 'slick ass'. You would get all the way up there and slide down (Reuben Ross).

Shower facilities might have been appreciated after using this mud slide.

You would have to wash and get all the sticks and grass out (Reuben Ross).

Some areas were better suited for diving than sliding.

Just a little bit above the railroad main, the kids had a swimming hole there. A big tree limb would stick out over the water, and a guy would get up there and dive off that. He didn't worry about hitting the bottom, hitting mud (Robin Lewis).

Lack of the buoys which mark the deep areas at swimming pools might have saved some waders from harrowing experiences.

Around Mecca there is one place up there they call the '40-foot hole.' There was very few people that could ever go down in that hole and hit the bottom of it. One fellow told me that there was three ledges of rock in that. You could go down one way and find a ledge of rock and go down and find two more ledges below that. I know one fellow thought about it one night. He was from Excelsior Springs, and I asked him what he knew about that place. He says (that) it almost got a guy drowned in there once. He couldn't swim, but he could tread water like it was a natural thing to do, you know. He just walked off into this thing, by golly; and he was treading water, with that much of him sticking out of the water. He had been just like he was riding a bicycle. Another old boy behind him couldn't swim a lick, by golly; and he could wade that thing, and I can too, and he walked off in it. They had to pull him out (Robin Lewis).

During the winter the swimming holes were transformed to ice arenas.

When we were kids we were on the creek bank skating in the wintertime. You could skate quite a ways up the creek. There was one area in there you would have to get off that ice and walk around the bank before you could get back on solid ground. The water would never freeze there (Robin Lewis).

Some skaters went long distances.

This Little Platte they call it now, it was the Smith Fork then, was about the best skating we had. East of Mecca there, quite a strip in there was good. I skated from the schoolhouse which is right down on the county line to Smithville and back one afternoon, me and two other boys. It is mostly ripples down through there. We was walking in the water about as much as we was skating on account of those ripple places. Ripples is where the water won't freeze because it was going

over too fast, shallow water, see. You would break through it with your skates, and you would get your feet wet if you weren't careful. Then you would hit a place where the water was still, it would freeze. We skated to Smithville and back. We left at 10:00 in the morning and got back at 4:00 that evening or a little after (Hugh Martin).

Skating parties were common events.

I always went with a group ice skating, but we didn't have shoe skates then. They was skates that you clamped onto your shoes. I had weak ankles, and I never did ice skate. I tried a few times. My father was an excellent ice skater, and he tried to teach me. Like I said, I had weak ankles. If I'd had shoe skates with some braces, I could have done it. They had skating parties, mostly on Saturdays and Sunday afternoons; and they would build a bonfire; and maybe we would have a weenie roast. At least you kept warm by the bonfire (Frances Orr).

Since automated ice machines were not available to smooth the ice, skaters had to make necessary preparations before gliding across the surface.

We had a lake out east of town here, in fact, it is still out there now. Automotive equipment was in this old building out there. That was a nice little lake out there. When it would come a snow, frozen over, we would go out there and scoop that thing off and, by golly, start skating. We would do the same thing to the river. The river was frozen over, by golly, come some snow on top of it, we would take a shovel and broom and stuff down there and clear it off. Build up a bonfire, everybody would bring a bunch of weenies, if you could find them, and a bunch of buns and have a heck of a time at night. Nothing else to do back in those days. It would still be fun to me. People would enjoy it (Robin Lewis).

Certain skaters were known for the feats they could perform on the ice.

We had one in the bunch, he was a high jumper. He would get back up the river about 100 yards, and a couple of us would stand down and hold a stick up. (We would) start out by maybe having it about this high. Well, he would come down the river just (as) fast as he could; and jump it, you know. Then the next time he would go a little higher. Of course, he had it fixed so if he did hit it, he wouldn't hurt himself (Reuben Ross).

Skating was such a popular activity that other sites were used besides the river.

I never knew what a rink was; I never saw a rink in my life. Out here where this little CB radio place is now, that use to be all slough out in there. There always use to be a puddle of water out there in the wintertime, good size

puddle. People was always skating out there on the other side of the highway down here. Of course, it is all filled in now, right on the other side of Main Street. They got to taking their old cars down there and throwing in this place and filled this old slough up. We skated for years down in that place, skating in among and around the old cars (Robin Lewis).

The new facilities at the Smithville Lake will presumably rekindle interest in the recreational aspects of the water. In recent years the river has lost its appeal to young people.

You never hear of kids going to swim in the creek anymore or getting on the creek going ice skating. They won't go ice skating anymore unless they have got a rink someplace, you know, where it is swept off nice and clean for them. We didn't worry about it (Robin Lewis).

For people of all ages, one of the major forms of entertainment afforded by the river was fishing. Several techniques were used to catch the various types of fish which lived in the river.

Back in themdays, my mother fished all the time. She would take us fishing all the time, maybe two, three times a week. We was just big enough to play, we would just play around there, and she would fish. I used to go over there with my dad and my uncle and another fellow named John Greyson and Horas Greyson and Ned Hawkins. They would all get in there and go seining. I would go and see them there in that creek about an hour and a half, and (they would) have two washing tubs full of fish. After I got big enough, we went fishing. They used to have a little piece down there called the 'Red Horse.' You would throw your hook in the creek and that bugger would bite anything. The first fish I caught was a red horse. He was good eating, but he wouldn't get very big. He was red and speckled, about six inches long. He was like eating a bass or something like that (Roy Bailey).

Hook and line was not the most popular type of fishing method.

I never did fool with a hook. I always hand fished. That takes place during June. That is when the channel cats and blue cats lays their eggs. There was lots of big rock in the river then. These channel cats would get under them rocks to lay their eggs, and they will also get in a hollow log, lay their eggs and hatch their fish. I could just take out up the river, I didn't have to wade in the water. I could just go up the bank, and I would know where a rock was. I just go in there; and, if there was any fish under, I would catch them with my hands, . . . (and) put them in a sack (Reuben Ross).

Hand fishing, which is also known as "hogging," "rocking," or "doodling," was a favorite sport and had several variations.

As far as fishing with a pole, I don't suppose I've ever went half dozen (times) in my life. As a boy, I was raised on this creek. We knew where every drift, every rock, everything was. You would go down in there with your hands and bring them out. You know there is a lot of deep water here where the Little Platte runs into the Big Platte. The water used to be 10 to 14 feet deep, and us boys as kids, (at) my uncle's out there by the Trimble Bridge, used to find an old hollow log. We would take it down there and roll it in because it would sink. You would go back there in the middle of summer around the log. We would go down and take a net and put over the end of that and chase them out the other end and get them big catfish (Jesse Edwards).

Placing logs in the river was not a necessary requirement for hand fishing.

You would reach in the hole, there was just a hole back in the bank. You would start sticking your hand in there, and if he bit your fingers, you would know he was there. Then you just worked your hand around till you got ahold of him. We always had a gunny sack, we called it, . . . in case we did catch one (Benton Summers).

The fishermen did not always look for holes which occurred naturally.

Buster Summers remembered

. . . going down on the Camp Branch with my dad. He would take a post hole logger and drill holes in the bank about a foot, foot and half, under the level of the water and go down there; and there would be catfish in those holes. He would catch sometimes as many as two, three, in the morning. He would drill eight to ten of those holes in the banks, . . . and he doodled around with his hands in those holes. Sometimes he would catch two to three channel cats in there. They were really good. That was hand fishing, doodling, however you want to term it. You would find a stick and work your hands real easy, and you would feel that dude. You would try to hang on to him and pull him out of there, put him in a sack, and take him home.

Using a stick to "doodle" the fish avoided some of the risks associated with this activity. One technique and some of the hazards of hand fishing were recalled by Ora May.

We would go in there a certain time of year when the weather is hot in August, July; and they would go back in holes. I would run (my hand) back in the hole. I don't know why, it seems it wouldn't feel very good. I guess if you ain't used to it. The big catfish would jump and grab you there. Well, I got used to it. When he jumped and grabbed me, why I just go down and get my thumb in his gills; and, shoot, I would bring him out. He would flop and hit me way up here with his tail. When there is one fish in there,

there is always two. If you be careful, (you) could catch both of them. They would be way down in under the water, down around a log, in a log, (or) where the muskrats had dug out there would be a hole. But you would have to be awful careful to put your hand down there and reach down there with what you came out with. I never did get bit by a muskrat, but some of the boys had. You go down those holes and reach out, and come out of that water, well he would grab you, that muskrat. He was bad about that. Nothing would bite me under the water except a fish. I felt snakes, now they will bite you, the old water moccasins. I never did have anything bite me under the water except a fish, be the only thing that would grab me.

Other mishaps could befall the hand fisherman.

Well, a lot of people can't stand it. They'll jump as soon as they touch a fish. I know I went hand fishing one time. Right north of where we live out here, there's a smaller creek they call Camp Branch, it runs into it. Well I had a sack with a draw string in it see, I put over my shoulder. I went hand fishing by myself; but, I got way up the Branch there, and there was an old stump. Of course, I was in the water, you know. This old stump was there, and I was feeling under this old stump like this; and, I happened to notice there was a great big water moccasin snake alaying in the hole-like place of that stump. I had my nose practically right again him. Well I'm telling you, I took my sack and got out of there and I headed home. I didn't take time to see if this was or was not poisonous (Willard Payton).

Another form of fishing, seining, required several people and the use of a net.

I remember that we did go fishing some. I remember that my boyfriend who was Hugh Martin and his sister Mildred, let Mildred and I go with him and an uncle of mine, Uncle Gene, and some other neighborhood men fishing. They were going seining. They gave we two girls permission to go along and help drag the seine. We thought it was a great privilege until it got so rocky and rough in the bottom of the creek bed that we were glad when that seining spree was over and they let us out. We didn't care to do that anymore (Alta Martin).

I never did fish much with a pole. But I fished a lot with seines, things like that. I fished all up and down this river here with a seine and Platte River, too (Virgil Bainbridge).

Fished every way shape or form, illegal and legal. Seining, you know, was illegal in some places. We would seine. We would take a seine and go to the creek when we were sure the game warden was somewhere else (Hugh Martin).

We did have a tremble net, and every once in awhile we would sneak down there and set it around a brush pile and get over there and chase them into a net and catch them, illegal (Clyde Taylor).

Eugene Arthur described the type of seine used.

I imagine (it was) 60 feet long, probably 8 feet deep. About an inch or an inch and a quarter of mesh. There wasn't any regulations on them then.

Quite a few people were needed for this operation.

They would generally be about six or seven go fishing. It would take one man on the end and two to three following along to unsnag it on the bottom because it would snag. We sat around drifts and open patch. You would drag seine it. A boy or two followed along to carry the sack (Eugene Arthur).

Some fishermen preferred a different technique to moving the net upstream.

Sometimes we would drag it; but as a rule to catch a fish, we would go around a tree that had fell in the creek, set around it, and get it down, and then get in there and catch them with our hands (Hugh Martin).

The distance covered and success of one trip was remembered by Eugene Arthur.

The seining I went on, we drove over to the Camp Branch, south of Paradise, and walked up Ben McDaniel's bottom field and seined back down to the bridge. As well as I can remember, we had two gunny sacks pretty near full of mostly white carp. Now, there isn't any white carp in that river, it is too muddy. The German carp, bull heads, catfish are still there.

Like hand fishing, seining had its hazards. Reuben Ross recalled one example.

Sometimes you would run onto a snake. I never did get snake bit. I did get a little one in my pants leg one time. We was fishing with a net and we sat around these drifts, and there would usually be a lot of carp and cats in these drifts. Them drifts had a lot of fine trash in them. A drift is where it washes down the creek and gets to accumulating around the tree that is hanging out in the creek and will make a big drift. Maybe it would go clear across the creek (with) brush, sticks, and all kinds of trash. It will stay there until the next high water. Well, we sat around one of them drifts. You would usually have on overalls and shirt, you would get your britches full of trash and stuff. I knew I had a lot of trash in

my pants leg, but I felt something wiggle. I had a little blood catcher get in there, and they will wiggle too; but there was something that wiggled up here. I just reached down and grabbed it like that. It wiggled a whole lot more when I got ahold of it, and I seen right then it wasn't no mud cat. So, I told one of the boys that I was fishing with that I had a snake in my britches leg. I was hanging right on him. I didn't know what part I had, but I knew his tail was loose. He come around and unbuttoned this side button, and he looked down, and I had caught him just below the head. He reached in there and got him by the head. He was just about a foot long, a little water moccasin. He reached in there and got him and pulled him out and gave him a sling. That was the only time I got a snake in my britches leg.

Regardless of which technique was used for fishing, the catch ended up as someone's meal.

Oh, my land, we use to eat alot of them. I use to help my grandad there when I was about 15 years old. He liked fish awful well. He lived east over there of Mecca. I would plow corn for him. He is dead now. He would say, 'Why don't we go fishing this evening awhile.' I really enjoyed it. I would go down and catch three, four, about like this. They would weigh about four, five, pounds. It would just tickle him (Ora May).

Some areas had community fish fries.

Oh, we'd catch carp, catfish. I know one time way back down when I was 10 or 12 years old, after threshing season, why the neighbors would all get together. We all went by horses and carriages, and we went out here on this Big Platte River where . . . this Little Platte runs into Big Platte. They call it the Narrows. And we went out there and all the men went fishing, caught the fish; and we cooked them right there; and we had a big day. We played on the river, the whole neighborhood, I don't know, I expect 50 to 60 people. Somebody would have a seine or something, and they would catch the fish. Then we'd dress them, cook them, and have a big day. Everybody took meals, had a lots of fish, and we'd do that pretty near every year, for a long time; but finally, when automobiles kind of come along, things kind of broke up. We done different things then (Virgil Bainbridge).

Churches collaborated to have ecumenical fish fries.

These churches, like I was talking about, once a year they would have a big fish fry. There were three churches, Hoover Christian Church, Methodist Church, Little Platte Baptist Church. Every year they would have these fish fries, and the men would all go to the river with their nets and trap some fish. That was a great thing as kids. We would have a regular picnic (Jesse Edwards).

Fishing could be profitable also.

I would sell a few once in awhile. I will tell you another story about a show. There use to be a lot of shows that come through the country, medicine shows and stuff, you know, to sell medicine; and they would have a pretty good show (with) a lot of comedy. Well, there was one in Paradise, and I was broke again. I forgot what it cost to get in, but I didn't have any money. So I made up my mind that evening that I was going to see if I couldn't catch some fish. I went up the creek about half a mile and tripped off and went over across this log and it had two nice blue cats in it about 18 inches long, weight three to four pounds. I got that the first lick, got them two blue cats. Well, there was a fellow plowing corn down there between home, and he had a pretty good size family. I had him in view when I went fishing. I thought maybe if I caught anything, he would buy them. So I come by, and I had these two blue cats on a string; and he commenced smiling as soon as he seen them. About the first thing he wanted to know is what I would take for them. I said 75 cents. He asked if I would take them up to the house. He lived up there on the hill. He give me 75 cents, and I took them up there and put them in a tub of water; and that got me into the show and had money left (Reuben Ross).

Newer residents of the area have had to adapt to modern fishing equipment; because, as all the oldtimers are quick to point out "fishing with your hands is not legal any more" (Jesse Edwards). There is a similar ban on seining.

Those who have spent their lives along the river banks have witnessed changes in the fish population and in the river itself. Most of the alterations are blamed on human intervention with the stream and land around the water.

There use to be a lot of good fishing there till they built that dam, the first dam down there by Smithville. After they built that, you would hardly catch any buffalos. They wouldn't come up over that dam (Roy Bailey).

That old Miller Bridge down there, when we moved here in 1910, you could have drove a wagon load of hay under the approach on that bridge. Now you can't hardly crawl under there, it has built up that much. That makes me wonder how long that lake will last before it fills up. They have taken some land out of cultivation, but there is still a lot of settlement around there. They begin filling up here at the upper end of it. The 'old river,' as my Aunt Anna, use to call it, it was too deep to go seine fishing in (Eugene Arthur).

Right above here a little ways there use to be rock bottom, you can't find it no place now, just mud (Robin Lewis).

None of the changes have come about rapidly. The river-watchers feel there has been a slow progression to the current state.

It was just a gradual thing. It was a dirty shame, because this was a beautiful creek. The water was always clear, you didn't find it muddy. After a rain, yes, but in just a little while, it would clean out (Robin Lewis).

It wasn't noticeable, the change, from year to year. Your holes would change. Some holes would be deep this year and washed out another year (Eugene Arthur).

Robin Lewis explained his theory of what caused the changes in the Little Platte.

The only thing I could tell you about that is the way the old Little Platte Creek has changed. When I first remember it, first came to town, the thing was clean. At that time we had the dam down here in town where the old mill had been used, that left the good water. We could go up the river for quite a ways in a boat. At that time all the banks were almost straight up and down (and) didn't have any timber on the banks. In fact, right down here where the bridge is here in town--you would never know it now--but there was a creek bank there, just a little higher ground, that we had a croquet court on. Believe it or not, we had it set up for croquet court, sand court, with concrete around it, electric light down there, benches down there. We had our boxes up on the trees that we kept our mallots and everything in; and you can believe it or not, by golly, nobody every worried about the creek getting up. As soon as these farmers began to get a little hoggish and began to cut this timber back from the creek bank, the old willow started in as soon as they cut the good timber off. You can take the minute a willow gets started on a creek bank, it grows for a few years; first thing you know, the ground around it, after a few rains, begins to get a little greasy. If you let those willows start in, by golly, that bank will slip off just like you plowed it off. The willows is what has caused this creek to fill in, by cutting the hard timber off. Willows won't grow where that hard timber is. You cut it out, they take over.

Some of the changes in the river have resulted in the need for the Smithville Dam project. The new lake will not only affect those who have lived in the area for a long time but may also attract a new generation whose lives will feel the impact of living near the river.

FLOODS

Perhaps the closest tie shared by inhabitants of the Smithville Lake region was the river. Recreational activities which brought people to the water are discussed in the chapter on the river. Neighbors were also united in times of need when they had to avoid the river water in fighting the effects of the periodic floods.

Observations by many people indicate that the frequency and seriousness of floods changed over the years. Various theories have been formulated to explain the increased danger of floods.

It was a wide channel and deep water. Didn't hardly know what it was to get out of the bank. About 40, 50 years ago, it commenced filling up, coming down from up above. See it is about 30 miles to the head of it above Plattsburg, and the farmers up there farm, you know, and there would come a big washing rain and wash all that dirt off right down the creek. The river just kept afilling up. Every-time the river would get up and out, it would leave about four inches of mud. Where it used to be a deep branch, it got to where you could step across it. It was all filled up. Branches were running into the river. Nothing like it use to be at all. It is just all filled up (Reuben Ross).

The thing to me is, they talk about all these floods, and yet in working with this history, it's happened from the beginning of time. I know it's probably worse because of the cultivation and all; but I don't care, it still happened periodically way back there. It's recorded there where the oldtimers tell you, 10 or 15 years, right along with the droughts and the other. (If you live near a river), you're going to have floods. I say God made the lowlands, he made the river for the water to run in, run off the hills into. Arthur Smith settled there because he needed the power to turn his wheels to run his business, and the town organized around it, of course (Marjorie Harris).

It used to get up in the streets, the flood did; and then they put in 169 highway, and I forgot what year that highway went in. Anyway, after they built that highway and used that bottom, it dammed up Smithville. It would get in the buildings and give them trouble after that; because,

all the water would have to go under that one bridge down there, and they ain't room under there, and that is what flooded the town so bad. While that dam was here, it could go on away. The city here went over and built that lagoon, and it would go on straight on across. Now it has to turn and go north and then back (Jesse Edwards).

The creek would take more water to fill up there after they built that dam down there, and it didn't run as fast. It would overflow quicker (Roy Bailey).

The first big time we had it is when they put this 169 fill in it. That was the first time it really rose high (Lucile Wright).

It seemed to me like it happened every year; but I remember, my father said that he had to figure the income on his property on a five-year basis, because once in five years his crops would flood out. When it flooded and the water receded, it left this fine silt, and the next four years he raised bumper crops. So he never objected to the flooding. It was just something you accepted. I think that anybody that has ever lived near a creek or a river or whatever has always been that way. It would flood. The reasons floods had become a major issue, I think, is the fact that we had destroyed the natural things that stopped part of that flooding. We have cut down trees, brush, and shrubery that use to hold that water, soil and things. Now there is nothing to hold it, and it just goes shwit, and (we) haven't replaced it. I think that when the earth was created, I think even your most vicious animals are something like that. There was always something to counteract that, something that was also created to kill them, so they wouldn't overpopulate the world. I think that it was intended for us to have rains and water would drain off, but I think that we have changed the lay of the land, and like I said, changed the roads, natural resources, until I think it a problem, this flooding business, that we have brought on ourselves. That is my idea (Frances Orr).

As children, memories of floods were not terrifying but rather happy and amusing.

I was ten, 1930. In 1930 I lived close to the river. At that time the only thing, ten years old, the only thing I remember was when the river backed up Owens Branch into the road and would do awful things, but we had lots of fun. The parents, they'd let us go out and slide down the mud road into that. Of course, it was 10 or 12 feet deep down there. Well even deeper in the creek bed, you know. But we'd go right out our gate. It would come up around the corner of the road almost to our gate, and we would slide down into that risen water. We wore Unionalls, striped Unionalls. We were the boys that my father didn't have. But I don't remember any unpleasantness at that time (Marjorie Harris).

The first remembrance of the creek (is that it) would flood and we would go down and look at the high water and the current, and that has happened ever since I can remember. I can remember one time my brothers took me down there and the creek had been up, and on down I ran, down the west end of Ross' Mill Bridge. It was different from what it is now, and I ran across that bridge and ran off there, and it was just as slick as glass. I fell flat on my back in that mud and filth and slid from it seemed like 15 feet, and it might not have been but 5 feet; but anyway, when I got up I was filthy muddy all over. When we came home from the creek, my brothers made me ride on the fender, so I wouldn't get mud in the car (Buster Summers).

Sometimes warning signals were apparent a few hours before a flood, and most people who lived near the river spent the time anxiously observing the water.

'What's the water doing up at the Miller Bridge?' Everyone would run up to the Miller Bridge. Back in the '40's (my husband) and Daddy would lay in there and sleep. Daddy's house is just the third house from the river there. They would lay in there sound asleep, and I'd be up in the middle of the night. There was this big tree down there. When the water got up to that tree, then I just didn't sleep. It was a long ways from getting into the house but it worried me from the beginning (Marjorie Harris).

Once the water began to run, the overflow came swiftly.

There come a big rain, and then you'd hear all kinds of rumors, and you'd watch the river. It would come up pretty fast and then it would go down pretty fast. It never would stay up too long. Maybe one day or a day and a half, it would run down. We could have a thunder storm; we had one in '47 in the afternoon; and, by midnight it was in a lot of houses there in town. It run down pretty good, come through there pretty fast. They always had a saying, 'We had a big rain come down from Plattsburg,' you know, which you never knew if that was true or not (Shorty Harris).

Although adults were always cognizant of the dangerous and destructive effects of floods, the river's activity in certain years was more memorable than in others.

I had chickens, and I had canned fruit, and we had a garden, and then the flood came. The garden was all covered except a row of poppies that went full bloom. They looked beautiful in that muddy water; and that's his favorite flower, poppies. That was the only thing we could cling to in the mud. Down in the cellar, where I had bricks and the board on it with my fruit, everthing was turned over. The jars were on the floor (Nannie Payton).



Figure 1.
View of the Patterson Mill During an Early 20th
Century Flood. Courtesy of Smithville Historical
Society.

Farmers and town people were separated by the water.

The facts of the case was you couldn't get to town from out there. The river would be out in the roads. See, there wasn't no way (Willard Payton).

Isolation from town could be a serious matter as at the birth of the Payton's second granddaughter in the late forties.

(Our) daughter was out home, and she became sick, and he had to take her by tractor with a lantern in front. Couldn't get into town like we should, three miles. Went on this way and around, in back, got down to the foot of the hill and they said, 'You cannot get in town.' She was in (labor), and I just wondered if she'd ever make it anywhere at night with the lantern light. They said, 'You can't get into town.' Well, she started to let out a scream, she was in such pain. I wasn't with her, he was. I was at home with the other granddaughter caring for her. (The baby) was born in Josh Henry's home. She could not get to the hospital. They always called her 'High-Tide' (Nannie Payton).

Preserving as many of one's most important belongings as possible was a flood-time chore. In 1951, this task was required of many people as a major flood hit the area.

In the '50's was the highest I ever saw it. I saw it out in them bottoms running around and such as that (Roy Bailey).

I remember that flood, I believe, was the one that (Shorty) went back down in there with Daddy to carry the bees out. And the current, why buildings were going through there (Marjorie Harris).

Well, that was in '51, I believe. He had bees in the back yard, and he began to worry about his bees. The water was getting up on the hives, so we went down there, and we had a table on the back porch. We had a screened-in back porch. The water was about knee deep when we went down there and set those three hives of bees up on that porch on the table. We was there maybe 30 minutes, and when we started out it was about waist deep; but that's about as high as it got that time. I had a pair of knee-toe boots . . . and I had to take them off and dig my toes in the gravel road to keep (my balance). Where it come around the corner of the house, it was swift. It would almost carry you off of there. If it had been a little deeper, it would have carried you anyhow (Shorty Harris).

Besides salvaging possessions, flood victims had to find dry places to stay.

We had company, Shorty's Army buddies were all here. We had to go to his sister that lived up the street here about a block. We had to all go up there. I remember taking all

the garden stuff. She wasn't very happy when she saw us coming with all that junk, taking all these heads of cabbage, all the garden stuff that we could salvage (Marjorie Harris).

The most disastrous flood in most people's memories occurred in 1965. During this year the river rose higher than it had in previous years and caused much more damage.

Well, at one time, in '65, it's marked on that brick building down there. It (was) 12 foot deep right there in town (Willard Payton).

Many homes were completely washed away by the flood waters.

(Our house) floated down the river and they demolished it. It was still intact, but they demolished it. (That night) we were, we'd already moved down town. My sister had built prefabs. She had these three lots next to the river, my sister had lived in one and there were four houses there. My dad's house was next to the last one. She had it rented, and they had built a new prefab house on the corner, four houses from the river. It washed their house, strung it all over the country (Marjorie Harris).

Events of the 1965 flood were so striking that several people had clear memories of their experiences that night. Lucile Wright recalled her activities.

I was at home alone, and, that afternoon, a friend of mine from Edgerton came down. He said, 'I'm afraid this river is going to get up.' I said, 'Oh, do you think?' He said, 'I believe we had better take up these rugs.' So, he helped me; and we took up my living room rug and my dining room rug, and I carried quite a good many things upstairs. They were moveable. But the rugs, unfortunately, we dropped them in the front bedroom upstairs, which was put on after the rest of the house was built. And there were two steps up from that front room to the back part of the house. Fortunately, I wasn't scared, and of course he left; and I was there at home. I sat down that evening and was listening to the television; and all of a sudden, I looked down and water was coming in on the floor. So I grabbed two radios and put them one under each arm and went upstairs. I looked in later, looked down, and could see the water was a foot or two deep in the house. Well, I knew I couldn't get out, so I took a couple of naps, silly thing. The next time I looked, it was coming up the stairway. About one o'clock in the morning, somebody flashed a light in the window, and one of the men said, 'Goodnight girl, are you in there by yourself?' And I said, 'yes'. They said they were afraid that the house may go. Says, 'You better get out,' says, 'Come on out over the roof.' And I said, 'Oh, I'm scared of getting out that way.' I said, 'I'm

scared,' and they said, 'Oh, no, we will help you.' So, I had a little trouble raising the window, you know, it stuck, and I climbed out over the roof. I think I had my pocketbook with me, I believe I did, I'm not sure. I pulled down the window, because I was afraid it would rain, and we went next door. They had to go around to the side kind of the porch, because the current was too strong to get into the front. I said, 'Oh, my goodness, this boat is leaking water.' Water was coming in it. They'd picked me up in a boat. It was the Bowers boy, and Hays boy from Nashua. One of them said, 'Well you better get to this end of the boat.' We got there and the boat went over flip, flip, with his friends, and I came up about a second time and felt that I was under the boat, and I thought, 'Oh, goodnight, I've got to get out from under this boat.' So I did, and I couldn't get on to any place, I never was much of a climber. So, I held on to the walk. For years I had tried to learn to swim and never did, but I decided I would kick my feet some, so I did. Well, the boat started down with the current, and Helen and Bill and Jean, I didn't see them at all. So, I didn't know what on earth had happened to them, and they thought I was drowned. In fact, they gave out over town that I was. I never was down Meadow Street, I think where it was, was on the last house on Meadow Street on the right hand side. That is going west, that is the way the current was going, toward the river. I had a hold of a rope or something (which) gave way, and I thought, 'My goodness, I've got to get to a tree, or something because this boat is going to break up.' So I got close to a tree, and got hold of a limb. I was heavier then than I am now, so I kind of pulled on the limb, and I kept a hold of the boat, too. I found a limb about (six inches across), and I thought, 'Well, that will hold me up.' So, I threw my leg over that limb. I got up on the limb. I was in the tree and the water was up, and I knew I had to get up higher. So, I got up with my feet under me, and I got up higher. I stood and held on to the tree. They started in looking for us, and there was a patrol boat flashing a light around. So, I said, 'Oh, boys, here I am up a tree.' So they came, and said, 'Can't you swim to us?' And I said, 'I can't swim at all.' So, they came on, and they said, 'Well we will try to get in.' So they got as close as they could, and one boy said, 'Well, get on this prow, and it will pull you out.' Of course, I was scared to death, because I knew I couldn't swim, and I was afraid that I would go in the water, but they pulled me out. I knew that my clothes were in very much disarray, because when they pulled me up, it tugged on my dress. Of course, I had a dress on. So, they took me over to where that barn is on the side of the road there. The water was over the highway about (six inches).

There they had an emergency crew. I said, 'Oh, for goodness sake, take me to land, take me to land.' When they got there; I said to a man, 'Isn't this a hell of a fix to be in.' Of course that tickled him, they all laughed. So, they put me in a car with a reporter from Kansas City, and he wanted to know about it. They took me to the hospital where they were evacuating everyone. And I laughed and said that I bet I was the only one that night that got a kiss from a married man. One of the boys that had tried to rescue me, Mr. Bowers, I shouldn't tell his name, when he saw me, he said, 'Oh, my God, you are safe.' Then he kissed me. He was the first one in the boat. Then after that, we went to where they were going to evacuate us in the morning with Red Cross vehicles down to Liberty, and I had to laugh because the day before I had been down to Liberty to see a lawyer all dressed up. That morning when I walked into Liberty, I was wringing wet. But at the hospital, they gave us blankets to put around us. At the Red Cross, where we were going I didn't know, I didn't have any relatives here then. (Friends who) were living in North Kansas City said, 'Well, we will take you home with us.' So they took Jean and I to North Kansas City, and I stayed down there a week. They brought me back and forth to try to see what was left of the house and everything. Then I came back and I stayed with a cousin of mine up at Edgerton. She drove me back and forth and come and helped me try to clean out the mud. I can't tell you what it was like (coming back the first time). It just broke your heart. Everything was in such disarray. I have a secretary in here that was on the floor, everything was broken; and my bed had moved clear around. I had a baby grand, an old fashion cherry piano. It had moved it from the northeast of the side of the room to the southwest, and it was cracked. The water had even gone upstairs, and those rugs were just a sight. It got clear to the second floor, over 12½ feet. That front room had higher ceilings. Of course everything that was back was better, in the high ceilings it was worse. Everything had mud. I stayed (in Edgerton) three weeks, and then I still couldn't go in my house, and I stayed with Nelly Rice. She was a friend of the family out in the country here. I stayed with her two weeks. Then I went to Virgil and Bertha Bainbridge's. I stayed a week with Teddy McFall, too. She lived out in the country, and then I went to Virgil Bainbridge's. I stayed two weeks and came home, and there was another flood scare; so they come and got me, and took me out there again. They would bring me to town nearly every day, and I worked on the house. Of course the Mennonites came in here, and they were awfully nice to help. Some of (the victims) had trailers that they put in the yard. The Mennonites came and scrubbed. They just pitched in and worked like dogs. A woman came in, and in my bathroom the mud in my basin and tub was (two inches) thick, and I can see her now scrubbing.

Some losses were due to water damage and some to looting.

I looked over everything that I just looked over, and I don't know just what things they took. Little things, for instance, I had a plastic grater that I liked very much, I found it and thought, 'Well, that can be washed.' I washed it, and set it in the breakfast room, and I never did see it again. Little things like that. Mrs. Morton across the way, there was a davenport off someone's porch or porchswing, she told to come and get it. It was in their yard; and before they had a chance to, it was gone. I lost, now for instance, I had patents in the bank from the government for part of Grandpa's land; and I had one signed by John Quincy Adams. I found two of them, but you can't read them. And I had talked about asking somebody how they could be restored. (The water) got in the bank vault, and they didn't let us get our boxes for about two, three weeks. The water had been in there all that time. I had three watches in there. One old one that was my grandfather's that you wound with a key. Of course they rusted, I had mother's watch, a closed face watch, but I got Mr. Pittman, that was here in the business for awhile, and he restored it. I lost two, three watches, and one I found on the bottom of the floor. It is a Caravelle. I didn't even have to have it repaired that time (Lucile Wright).

Many people lost family mementos which could neither be repaired nor replaced.

We lost the family pictures here in 1965 when the water got eight inches deep into this room. Of course, we considered there were more important things at that time to take care of than pictures. So the pictures were dumped into the trash instead. If we just had put them in a tub of water and then later recleaned them, we could have done that. I lost about, at least a thousand pictures of my own in '65 and another thousand in '74. Those were some of the things that can never be replaced (Link V. Evans).

Being trapped on the upper floors of one's house was a common experience. Link V. Evans recounted his ordeal.

My uncle had the house cut up in four apartments. These two rooms on this side was one apartment. He had the other side of the house and then had the upstairs divided into apartments and had it rented out. There was a man and wife that lived here, and they were both about 70; and there were two ladies that lived upstairs, and they were both about 70. During the day, the flood waters started coming up. The ones down here in particular, (their) children came and wanted to move them out. They wouldn't hear to it. We'd seen this water come and go too many times; and, prior to '65, there never had been water over the floor in this house. It had been up in the yard and under the house but never had been on the floor. What really occurred

was that we went out, there was water out in the street out here, but not running down the street; and we went up and ate at Hillside. I had a cousin that was in the hospital up on the hill. We went up there and were visiting and had taken another cousin, her sister, along with us. My uncle and one of the ladies that lived in the house called up there and had me paged about seven o'clock in the evening. He said, 'Link, you'd better get down here. The water is running down the street.' So we came down where the old school building was here, and water was in the street there. I waded across from the building over there over to the church lot. You couldn't just walk across, you had to move a foot out, and bring the other one up to it and then move another one and then bring it up to it. The water was that swift going down the street, and hitting you about the knee or a little above. I came on in; and, of course, at that time there was a little water coming into the yard, but it wasn't anything like coming into the house. The pastor and three fellows from the local church here came in; and finding me, they came in to put up the preacher's furniture in the attic and that sort of thing. They hollered and wanted to know if I needed any help; and, I said, 'Well, probably could use some to get through.' I went out in the back yard and dug up some cement blocks and brought them into the house and we put them under the refrigerator. This couple in here had a deep freeze and a refrigerator, and we blocked it up, and they left. So I kept milling around here, and the water started running under the doors, and I had to put rugs against the doors and things like that. When it got about oh, half knee-deep, I began to take dresser drawers out and put them up on the top to keep things from getting wet. I continued until the water got deep enough that the dressers turned over. So then we went upstairs. Right about where I am sitting there was a rocking chair and the old gent in his '70's; I kept busy over on my side, and so finally I got caught up, and I looked in here, and he was sitting in the rocking chair with water in his lap. They had put some boards across and had feather ticking on top of those boards and had set the television up on top of those boards and had set the television up on top of that to keep it from getting wet. So I got him upstairs and got his clothes changed, and finally I actually put him to bed, because he chilled a little bit. From that time on then, it was just a matter of going from one window to another, looking. About 1:30 in the morning the transformer over here by the fire station went out, and the lights went out. Until that time we had lights in the house. We did have lanterns and lamps. I had a flashlight; and the rest of the night, then, we spent our time signaling the two men that were caught in this house behind us here. Their second floor is a lot lower than this one, and they got up on the bed over there to keep from standing in the water. It went down about as fast as it came up. When I got started, must have been around six o'clock when it started up, when it really made its rise. It would have been three, four

o'clock in the morning when it began to level off. And 5:45, it had just about quit rising when a boat come to get us. When they came up I told them that we were okay, 'We still have another foot to go here, but there are people behind us that are standing in water. Go get them, and then get us.' So they started around through the streets to get down to get those folks (Link V. Evans).

As the severity of the 1965 crisis surpassed any of the previous floods, many residents of the area were caught off guard.

You got caught without any clothes. We went out of here, I had on an old pair of those plastic thongs, you know, a pair of shorts, and a shirt, and that was it. I guess I had my pocketbook. But that was the first time I had ever left the house when the water was coming up either, because we had always stayed. I left (my husband) and my brother and his son and our son and two boys and my brother-in-law and his son. There were nine of them altogether. They were still putting up furniture. The boys had stripped of their clothes, running around here in the nude, and they couldn't find their underwear (when the boat came). That was the way you was caught. You know, you went out with just what you had on (Lucille Taylor).

When the flood waters receded, the victims faced new turmoils.

We were caught without any money. The bank was under. You couldn't write a check. The stores down the road got to where they wouldn't take a check. They didn't know when they were going to get the bank open. My bank box was all messed up, because you see it was up here on the corner. A lot of people banked out of town. My husband's brother-in-law brought us down some money (Lucille Taylor).

The entire appearance of the area had been altered.

The flood had cleared out so many of the houses. I didn't realize, of course, when you are right in it you don't think too much about it. My son lived up in Iowa, and this town had been an old mining community, and we went up there before he moved up there. I just couldn't get over the amount of old ramshackled houses, and it dawned on me that, well, we didn't have any because they had all washed out. Most of them was the older houses in the area where the water was and what hadn't been washed down the river had been sold to the state where they had to be taken out. (Lucille Taylor).

When the residents began the arduous task of repairing, rebuilding, and cleaning their homes, they received assistance from individuals and groups from outside the area as well as from each other.

They did bring in trailers for us to live in while we worked on our houses. We lived in a trailer up to just before Thanksgiving. A lot of them were in trailers a year or two before they got their work done. We were lucky. My husband is a plumber and he did work for a contractor that was building houses here in town, and he got a hold of him just right off the bat, and they came in and worked on our house, and we got in ours real quick. Our (trailer) was sitting between these two houses. The one next door was sitting on the other side of their house. (They) hooked them into your sewer and water and everything. The government brought those in, and then the Red Cross . . . brought trailers for a lot of people. You know my mother, they bought a trailer for her. Well, she ended up putting a little with it, and some of them did, in order to get a bigger trailer than some of them were. If it hadn't been for the Red Cross and Salvation Army and all, Moose clubs and things like that, I don't know. People, just people, that came out and helped and gave money, Mother got a \$100 bill in an envelope, no name, no nothing. They came out with clothes and money. I was out cleaning one day and a fellow stopped and gave me \$25. I said, 'No matter how terrible the world is, there is a lot of good people than what really was.' There is no way just the people and their family and friends could have done (without help). Like the Mennonites, there was a group from Kansas came and from Iowa came. The cities, like Gladstone and Kansas City, sent a lot of their equipment up here to help clean the streets and do things like that. We had lots of help (Lucille Taylor).

No matter how carefully one cleaned, the river left reminders of its visit.

You can't get away from that river mud, I don't care. Now we had our house, we had most everything taken out. We just tore it down to the studding. We put new drywall and new woodwork and everything up. But to this day yet, I still get river mud. You find it. I had a kettle, it was the only appliance that worked. It worked for about 12 years, but every once in awhile there would be a little mud that would sift down out of the inside. You never could forget what that mud looks like (Lucille Taylor).

Memories of the tragedy caused people to prepare in the event of another flood.

After that I put all my pictures in three old suitcases. When the river started coming up, that along with the papers in my desk, was the first things that went into the car. I packed a suitcase, too. I wasn't going to get caught without any clothes next time (Lucille Taylor).

Although everyone sustained personal losses, the flood did create a sense of community spirit.

There was a unity to the town after that. I wish it was back, that we could get it again. It wasn't, 'how much am I going to get out of it', it was a unity to the town (Lucille Taylor).

The Smithville Dam Project was instituted to alleviate the water control problems which brought disaster to the area. Some day residents may remember flood conditions as just one more story told by the oldtimers.

SCHOOLS

Numerous school houses served as educational and social centers in the project area. Many of these had a single room and only one teacher for the entire group; however, these small schools are highly rated by their graduates.

I think the kids learned more going to those old country schools than they get here now. The kids that finished 8th grade were smarter than the ones that got out of high school (Robin Lewis).

I think really some of our better people came from those schools. All three of our children were valadictorians of their class here in Plattsburg, and they all went or started in country schools (Irene Breckenridge).

At one time Paradise had both a grade school and a high school. Eugene Arthur described the elementary facility.

It was a two-room school house. Most of those country schools were. Some of them were just a one-room school and one teacher, but Paradise at that time had two rooms. It was built in an L-shape. The biggest room was on the north, and then it had an 'L' south of the little room. It was right east of the Christian Church there on the south side of Paradise.

Different classes were held in each room.

When I started to school it was two room. Four grades (were) in what we call the small, little room and 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th was usually combined in the larger room. There were lots of children here at that time. The population of Paradise at that time was at least a couple hundred, maybe more, and a lot of kids. We had a lot of kids in that school. There must have been 50 kids in that school during that time (Benton Summers).

The large number of children supported a high school as well.

Back when I was in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade, we had an old frame building, and we had high school in Paradise. We had two years of high school, and there would be any-place from 45 to 60 kids in the grade school and that was eight grades; and then in the high school building, why we would have maybe 15 or 20. They came here from all

directions out of other districts and went to school here because other districts in the area didn't have high school. After they finished that two years, a part of those high school youngsters went to Smithville and finished up high school. My brother, my sister, and I, we all finished our high school in Smithville. I have two years of high school in Paradise (Buster Summers).

Robin Lewis remembered the Paradise grade school he attended.

That was the old schoolhouse that I went to. There were two rooms, just a two-room school. The 6th, 7th, and 8th grades were taught in what we call the big room. A tornado got that rascal, by golly, a big part of it (and) tore it down back there part of it, back there in the '30's. They built a new one. If I am not mistaken I think a tornado took part of that one, too. I don't remember when they built it even.

The small rural schools were all similar in many aspects. They were situated throughout the project zone and were the subject of many fond memories. Several people attended Oakland School.

Oakland School is about a mile and a quarter northeast, and it was known at one time as the Dalton School house and then later known as Oakland School. I took my first year of schooling there. It was just a one-room school house with a cloak room and heat by a stove and the well was outside, outside toilets, just a typical country school, with a box style (Alta Martin).

I started school to a country school called Oakland. It was just up the hill. It was on our land. I went to school there. I really just went three years. One teacher put me through the 3rd and 4th grade (in) one year (Irene Breckenridge).

It was a one-room schoolhouse and just one teacher for all eight grades. I expect (there were) as many as 30 children, maybe more than that at times, but it was just a one-room school (Evalyn Taylor).

Another building was called the Stoney Point School. The Stoney Point School was a one-room schoolhouse, but we had two cloak rooms at that school--one for the boys and one for the girls. The cloak room (had) a place to hang your coats and a shelf to put your lunch pails on. The school was similar to Oakland, I mean as far as recess and noon and cyphering matches and all of that. They were all run approximately the same way and had outside toilets and outside well. They had a place for our horses, just like the Oakland School. They were just one-room school-houses (Alta Martin).

Hugh Martin recalled his school days at the Prairie Point School.

I went most of my school to what they call Prairie Point, which is just a little less than a quarter mile north of the county line as you go to Paradise. When I started to school there, there was two rooms, probably about 60 kids, 30 per room. They had what they called a little room and a big room. One teacher taught up to the 4th grade, and the other taught 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th. One year or two they did teach what they called a 9th grade. Some of the kids would graduate from grade school, and they would go back and take what they called the 9th grade. My sister did that I think, and I know several did. After that, after two to three years, the school dwindled down till they only had one teacher.

Even with a single teacher responsible for all levels, lack of students also caused the end of the Benford School.

When I went to the school in the country we only had one teacher for the whole class, I mean all eight grades. She wouldn't have full eight-year students in there. They might not have any students for 4th grade, or something like that, you know. It wasn't exactly full. Of course, they had, I think there was 26 students in that school when I went out there, when I first started. I think probably the last year I went, there might have been maybe 10 or 12 of us. It finally got down to where they just shut it down (Robin Lewis).

Other one-room schools included the Benson School, Gordon School, and Horn College. Nannie Payton described some aspects of Benson School.

We sometimes had as many as 20, one teacher, and maybe five grades. Our library was a shelf in front of one window. That was in later life, I was about 12, I suppose. This library consisted of four encyclopedias and about five reference books. That was our library.

She recalled the heating system for the school.

The first stove I remember is what they call the 'potbelly stove.'

Gordon School had a similar source of warmth, a big round stove back in the corner, it burned coal (Shorty Harris).

Shorty Harris remembered the layout of Gordon School.

It had three windows on each side and two doors in the front.

The Horn School was located

Northwest of Smithville about two miles and a half. I went to school at Horn College. My first teacher was Nannie Miller. My second teacher was Eva Allen (Claud Porter).

Like many of the other schools, Horn had a small enrollment with students numbering "I'd say maybe 15 or 16 just offhand" (Claud Porter). The single-room building housed all the students together with one teacher.

They taught up to about the 9th grade. That's about as far back in those days as they went (Claud Porter).

To cope with a larger student body, the Rocky Point School had an interesting way of dividing the classes.

It was a big two-room school. I expect there were 40 children going to school there. It had a north room and a south room, and in between it had a partition with two ropes on it. You could pull that partition up and make one big room. That was quite an undertaking. When you had a box supper, or something to do with schools and they expected a big crowd, they would raise that partition and have one big room. It didn't roll, it just raised right straight up into the attic. In the ceiling, between the two rooms, it was dropped down. The door didn't go from the floor clear up to the ceiling, it was dropped down enough so that you could see. Of course, ceilings was high to start with; and I remember we kids would tug on them ropes to get that thing up. My mother went to school there all right and lived there at the Miller place (Eugene Arthur).

Virgil Bainbridge recalled:

I went to a country school. The schoolhouse set right over here by the . . . Rockey Farm. The building is gone now. The foundation is still there. That school (has) been there a long time. My father even went to school there. It was two rooms. Well, when I started to school, there was eight pupils going there. We had two rooms and two teachers.

Black students were educated in separate facilities. Ora May remembered the school he attended near Mecca.

It was just a little one-room building there with a porch on the south side of it. They use to burn coal (there) in those great big stoves. The old building is still there. Some of those classes had seven to eight, some ten. In those days the teacher teached from the 1st to the 8th grade, one teacher. There would be 30 to 35 in one room sometimes. I don't think they had 40. I remember it (they'd) have 35, 36 sometimes. They would run from 8th grade down to 1st grade down to primer.

Roy Bailey also went to a black school in the Mecca area.

It was a pretty good size school. Colored school, all of it colored, around 60 to 70 kids went to it at one time.

The organization of the school was:

Just like in the church. She would have a desk up in front, and then there would be three rows of desks. One down on this side and one down through the middle and one down the other. Sometimes there would be three or four, and if they was little, there would be four in one sitting. When I went to school, there was four in most every seat that was there. Back in themdays, it was home-made seats made out of walnut. After that, they went and bought them factory seats. Back then, some of the kids that was still going to school was 20 years' old. Some of them boys had left home when they was (in) the first World War, left from right down there and went to war, then that come to cutting the kids down. When I quit school, I don't guess there was but 25 going to school (Roy Bailey).

Smithville had the largest school system and employed the largest number of teachers in the elementary school.

Each teacher had a grade here. One teacher had two grades, 6th and 7th; 1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 5th and 6th, was three teachers. Lena Hamilton had the 8th grade (Robin Lewis).

The first graduating class was 1910. There was just the grade school. Then later they built on part of the high school (Lucile Wright).

Regardless of where they went to grade school, most residents of the area who continued on through high school went to Smithville.

The original high school was situated:

South about a block from the main town. It's been tore down. It was a brick building. They built another one which my children and grandchildren went to school in (Nannie Payton).

The high school was not accredited immediately after its construction.

I never went to (the) high school. Mother took me to Kansas City, and I went to Westport High; because at that time this school was not approved. (That) was in 1916 (Lucile Wright).

Secondary education was not free of charge.

(I) went to Smithville, and that was three miles west of our home. I rode a pony. You had to pay tuition. It wasn't high then, about \$50 a term; but it seemed high. When my brother went, I was five years younger; and my parents didn't want me to go to one school and him another, so they paid extra tuition for me as well as him. (So) I went to Smithville High School the same time he went (Nannie Payton).

Three students aroused community effort to expand the original high school.

My senior year in high school, well I was interested in athletics, basketball, track. We didn't have any facilities to speak of, particularly any gymnasium. So with the help of two girls, we took up money from the public and got something over \$2,000. Mr. Majors the lumberman let us have the lumber at cost. So we built a gymnasium in Smithville for the high school. Now this was back in 1920. Now the two girls that helped me, we got something like \$2100 to \$2200 from public donations from the citizens in town; and we put up the gymnasium, which was a box gymnasium (and) which the school used for almost 20 years. Now that was my first public contribution, I guess. Harvey Cokrin paid all the bills and turned it over to the school board. That was the only gymnasium they had for 15 to 20 years (Jim Justus).

Buster Summers remembered the second gym.

In the fall of 1936, they built us a new gymnasium with some kind of grant from the federal government. That was back in WPA days, and they contributed to that right smart and built us a new gymnasium. We thought we had the world by the tail when we got that thing built, and we had a good basketball club and had a good football team.

All of the schools had a high turnover rate for the teachers. They didn't stay around long, they rotated (Benton Summers).

As a rule, a lot of them just stayed one year. Once in a great while, one of them wouldn't even make it through the year. They would get sick or take a notion to get married or something (Hugh Martin).

There were different ones, yes, had a different one pretty near every year. Some teachers stayed more than one year; but, most of them will stay a year or two years (Ora May).

There are several theories explaining the short terms worked by the teachers. Weather conditions may have affected the teachers' lengths of tenure.

It was kind of hard to get out there in the country. The roads was bad--no gravel--muddy roads. In the wintertime when it was rainy and bad it was awful hard on teacher to get there. I think we have had some of them teach as high as five years, (but) most of them (taught) just a couple of years to a year (Ora May).

Discipline problems and marital opportunities were also cited as explanations.

Probably the kids were so mean, that it made them so tough that they didn't want to come back to us. A lot of young ladies were teaching school at that time till they could get married. All of the training they had was out of the 8th grade. Most of them didn't have high school, but they had gone to a normal school, either Maryville, or Warrensburg. They would take a summer session of 8 to 10 weeks whatever it was, so they were qualified to come back and teach school. Most of those teachers went to teaching when they was 18, 19 years old, and, as soon as they found someone, or someone found them, that they felt compatible, they would marry and would quit teaching. I remember one of the teachers that come to me, Minnie Snow, lived over here by Harley about four or five miles. She drove two ponies, small horses, and a buggy, and went over. I think she taught two years before she got married. When she got married, well, we got another teacher (Benton Summers).

One former teacher gave her own reasons.

I taught school two years, but I was not cut out for a school teacher. I had no patience with the students who had mental capabilities to learn and repeatedly refused to try. It made me nervous and upset; and, I said, 'Surely there is an easier way of life than that, worrying with somebody else's children' (Frances Orr).

Various modes of transportation were utilized by pupils to make the trip to school.

I rode a pony to school, to high school; and to grade school, why we walked. It was less than two miles (Nannie Payton).

Walked a mile to school, walked to Paradise every day, and in mud or what have you, cold weather, we walked (Buster Summers)

(I) never knew what it was to ride. Sometimes there was a fellow that lived up the road, and he had five or six going to school. If it was that muddy, he would take them in the big wagon. Well, we would all get in. There was probably 15 from that road that would go to Paradise to school walking. Well everybody walked themdays. Oh, there might be a few that would ride a horse something like that, most of them walked (Reuben Ross).

Ora May, who also traveled on foot, remembered "It was about four to five miles to go. It would take us about 40 minutes."

Besides the practical effect of arriving at school, walking provided a social opportunity for the students.

You heard them and talking and such, and you aimed to be at the road when they got there, so that you could all walk to school together. At one time, I think there was

11 of us walking up this road. I don't recall all their names, but I think there was 11 of us that walked to school together; and when school was out, we went home. We had a big time, but that was all part of growing up (Buster Summers).

Another popular mode of travel was on horseback.

I was quite young, ten years old approximately when we moved to Mecca. I rode a pony to Oakland School. (At Mecca), I went to Stoney Point School then; and I rode a horse back to school there. I expect a dozen of us rode horses. Cars weren't that plentiful in those days, so we went horseback (Alta Martin).

Shorty Harris had an unusual way of getting to school.

He made friends with the railroad men.

They'd let us ride the handcar that little ways between there and the grade school.

Many of the students had quite a distance to go to attend high school.

I went to high school. I drove a horse and buggy. First year in high school, mother and dad got me a room with a Mrs. Clark, so I stayed in Smithville that fall and that winter. When things warmed up a little bit the next spring, I started driving a buggy. I drove that the rest of that year. It was a little over an hour's drive down there. I drove old Buck, that was my favorite horse; and I did that for the next three years, (until) I graduated in 1923. (I would) drive down and drive home every night. I guess (when) I was a senior, I had a room and stayed in Smithville some; but I don't remember how much. I stayed with one of the teachers there and her husband, Sterlings (Benton Summers).

I went to high school at Grayson, which was a consolidated school at that time. I rode five miles to school, five up and five back, horseback (Alta Martin).

In later years, some students formed car pools for the trip to Smithville High School.

First year I drove a Model T Ford, and there is a story about that. We could buy gasoline at this garage in Paradise, seven gallon for \$1. This would have been in the fall of '35. Well, my dad would give me a \$1 on Monday morning, and I would go buy my seven gallons. I would drive five days to school, and the next Monday he would give me \$1 and I would buy seven more gallons. But now the next week I should make it to Smithville on a gallon of gas, and I had accumulated in two weeks enough gasoline that should take me that coming week and I didn't get my dollar. So every three weeks it would cost him \$2 for gasoline. Walter Moreland rode with me, (and). . . a girl by the name of Frances David rode with me. She paid \$2 a month cash. Walt Moreland didn't have the money,

so he didn't pay the \$2; but when spring come, when we was through school, he worked it out, at \$1.50 a day. We cleaned out the barn, and we cut the winter supply of wood when school was out, and that is the way we got to school. My senior year, that would have been the fall of '36, I had a brand new car. My dad bought a brand new 1937 Chevrolet with the box knee action. That was the first knee action they had. It had a box and an arm and such on it and was supposed to be the best thing going. Well, anyway, we drove that dude to school, and I picked up Walt Moreland at Paradise and a boy by the name of Ralph Miller down at the Ross' Mill Bridge and at least one other girl across the creek by the name of Porter. We went to Smithville, and we drove to school in a brand new Chevrolet (Buster Summers).

Alta Martin described one problem which could occur with horseback travel.

I could have wore out several horses riding to school for four years. Running races up and down hills wasn't very good on horses, my dad told me. Sometimes they would be kind of 'stove up,' and you couldn't hardly get them out of the barn the next morning.

She explained the term "stove up."

You run a horse down hill, he is going to be so stiff and sore, he can't hardly go the next morning (Alta Martin).

A mishap which occurred in a horse-drawn sled was remembered by Nannie Payton.

Well I can tell one going to the country school. We lived . . . next to the last house down from the school on our particular road coming from the west to the east. (My father) would take the sled in wintertime and fix it all comfortable with covers and straw in it and so forth; and he'd pick up all the children till we got to school. One morning when I was on the sled, I had on a rose colored skirt and it kept getting tighter. It just got tighter and tighter, and I didn't know what was wrong. (I) went to get off the sled, and the sled runner was on that thing. It's nice I had a petticoat on. I didn't have any skirt. I picked it up and put it in the desk.

Parents in the project area were willing to make many sacrifices for their children's education. While some provided means of transportation, others completely relocated their families. The disadvantage of pedestrian travel caused the May family to move.

That is the place my dad moved to from up here, he moved (to Mecca) in August, so we would have a place to go to

school. You see we didn't have no school close to us at that time, and he moved down there that winter. He was there from August or September till March or April, he moved down in the bottom. In the wintertime we didn't get to go to school much. He wouldn't trust us with a horse or buggy. That was the way they got around in those days. We didn't get to go to school much after the weather got bad. (So) he wanted to move us so we could go to school (Ora May).

A dispute over a new teaching practice resulted in relocation of another household.

They started what they called alternation of grades, and my father and mother didn't believe in it. One year they would teach the 5th grade and the next year the 6th grade. They would teach the 5th and 7th one year, and the 6th and 8th the next year. When I finished the 4th grade, it was the year they taught the 6th grade; and my father and mother didn't see how you could take the 6th grade until you had the 5th. My father tried to get the school board to go back to the plan of teaching every grade like they originally did, but this was a state project to give the teachers more time with the pupil. So he bought a house in Smithville, well actually, it was a duplex--there was another family that lived in the other side--and my mother and I would go there on Monday morning and stay till Friday. My father batched down on the farm, and then we went home for the weekends. I started 6th, 7th, 8th grades and all four years of high school, seven years that we lived like that. My parents were very definitely interested in education (Frances Orr).

Other families wanted closer proximity to the high school.

We moved to town when I was a sophomore in high school to send me to school (Don Breckenridge).

It was 1914 when we came to town for my older sisters to go to high school. My two older sisters were in high school, and the first year in the fall we had a smaller horse named Maude, and we drove her (in) the spring wagon. We kids came to school till we moved to town then. My father kept the farm, and he spent his time at the farm mostly and then come up to town on Saturday and Sunday; but he stayed down at the farm. He sometimes would come in of an evening (Irene Breckenridge).

School days were organized similarly at each institution.

At the Paradise School:

We had classes, regular classes. We had what we called a recess. I don't remember when that came now. School took up at 9:00, I guess around 10:00 to 10:15, 10:30, we had a recess, short recess. We would go to noon and

have our lunch. I think we had close to about an hour at noon, where we ate our lunch, and came back for another session, and then another short recess. We were out at 4:00 and walked home. That went along that way from September, we had an eight month school at that time, till sometime in April (Benton Summers).

The program was much the same at Oakland School.

I don't remember in what order. You would go into school, it took up at 9:00 and it would have classes. In mid-morning, you would have what we called recess; we would have a 15-minute recess. That gave you time to go to the rest rooms and maybe play a little short game, get you a drink and get all settled in till noon. Then at noon, we had an hour and you had your lunch and time to play games in the yard, if weather permitted, (or) games on the blackboard inside (Alta Martin).

Buster Summers remembered a lunchtime tradition.

There was one boy that lived in Paradise, his name was Walter Moreland; and he and I started to school the same day, and we graduated from Smithville High School the same night. Ever since I can remember he lived in town, and his dad worked for E. P. Griffen and H. H. Halferty. He always brought lunch meat in his dinner. Well, my mother sent me to school with a piece of fried meat, ham or shoulder, and maybe sausage or something of that kind. Well, I liked the lunch meat, and Walt Moreland liked my fried meat. I would say that every day for at least ten years when we opened our lunches, we traded one sandwich, and that was just automatic. There was no questions asked, we just traded sandwiches.

They had different classes for the different ones. Teachers were pretty busy in those days when they taught all grades. You had quite a bit of individual attention, too, because there weren't all that many that would take up the teacher's time. The little country schools were good. We had good teachers. They were paid pitifully small salaries in those days, but of course the dollar was more than it is today (Irene Breckenridge).

Frances Orr explained her classroom organization while she was teaching.

I came back to Paradise and taught two years, and they were still having one teacher with four grades when I taught there. You would have your first grade reading class for 30 minutes then you would have second grade reading class for 30 minutes, then a third and fourth. Then you would start on arithmetic, and you would go through that. If you had any pupils who were exceptionally bright, and they had finished their work, then they would help the lower grades. Now often the teachers have someone who assists them; but at that time, we used the older and brighter students to help the younger children.

Sometimes you got through every class during the day and sometimes you didn't get through. If the students were particularly interested in a certain project that they were doing, it seemed the thing to do was to pursue that other than change their train of thought and say, 'Well, we have had it now for arithmetic, let's go on to history, or geography or something of that sort.' Your open classroom school today is very much the same thing. My grandchildren go to an open classroom school. Now, I see very little difference actually. I sometimes think that it is an ideal situation; because, when you get out into the business world, you work in an office where there are 25 to 30 in there and you have got to have power of concentration. In your one-room school, if you got anything, you concentrated.

Besides serving as an educational site, the schoolhouse was also a social center.

We would hold cyphering matches and spelling bees after school usually or after the last recess. Why, on Friday evenings we would have spelling bees or cyphering matches. That I enjoyed very much because I always liked to see what someone else was kind of short in; and I made a habit to study that pretty thoroughly, so that the next Friday I could get up and beat them. I can remember us going to box suppers at school, it was a good thing in those days (Alta Martin).

Virgil Bainbridge detailed the activities at the box suppers.

Well, we used to at school in the fall of the year, they would have what they call a pie supper or box supper. We'd go there and have a program, and the girls would all take a box there, and they'd auction the boxes off. Of course, if you had a girl friend, why you would want to be sure and get her box; but they were all supposed to be disguised. Nobody knows whose box was whose until after you bought it. They auctioned them boxes off; and, then, of course, if you happened to buy them just on what you thought, then you had to eat with the girl whose box you bought. (You) had supper with her; and, of course, that way people met and had their entertainment.

Each school had these functions at different times. At Gordon School:

We always had our box supper every Halloween. The teacher would have us work for a week or two before Halloween to put on some kind of a play. We'd have speeches and entertainment, and then they would have a box supper. After that everybody took up their horses (to) go home. That would usually last until 11:00 or 12:00 at night. They would have an auction. If you had much opposition, it was a pretty good idea to get an older friend to bid

for you. So they wouldn't run it up on you so much. Sometimes if the other boys thought you wanted one pretty bad, they would kind of get together and pool their resources and bid against you just for the fun of it. Well, after the auction was over, whoever's box you had, you would sit in the school desk and eat the supper (Shorty Harris)

Martin School held this tradition at the end of the school year. We had ours the last day of school. The whole community came. I remember the ones at Martin's School House, which is out west and south of Smithville. Oh, probably 30 or 40 people came. You would fix the best food that you could possibly fix in there and fix the fanciest box that you could fix. Of course it didn't make any difference how it was decorated, they bought who they wanted to sit with. This older boy got my name (once) and I was scared to death (Marjorie Harris).

The high school had numerous traditional gatherings. There was football games, and you would go right from football season into basketball, Junior plays and Senior plays and proms. We had prom; however, our prom was held at the Christian Church basement when I was a Junior and Senior; and, I can't remember, evidently we must have danced up at the gym afterwards, I can't remember. The Alumna was active back then, and they would always have an Alumna dance for the Seniors, usually about two dances a year. Homecoming then was home coming, now it is not Homecoming for the alumna as there is nothing for the alumna. They used to have an assembly and recognize the one that was the oldest and had come the furthest. They don't even have that anymore. I don't even know why they even bother calling it Homecoming. At one time they used to have basket dinners. They would have their dinner, and then of course the game was in the afternoon, and it was a full day affair and then they would have the dance at night (Lucille Taylor).

Some students felt there was a lack of activity during their high school years.

Anything that happened at Smithville was involved with the school; and I'll tell you what, there was very little of that went on. I can't remember ever being to a school dance for two years. We always played football in the afternoon, no lights (Buster Summers).

Maintaining classroom order has always been a major concern for teachers.

The teacher wanted to keep us as quiet as she could and get your lesson and not be talking with a lot of kids. It was

hard to be still and be quiet. A lot of us would be talking loud above a whisper, and she would want you to whisper. A lot of them would forget to whisper (Ora May).

I don't recall that when I was going to school, I don't recall that the teacher had any discipline problems; and, when I was teaching, I had very, very few discipline problems (Frances Orr).

Early educators had more alternatives open to them in enforcing school rules.

They didn't mind laying the stick on you either. Usually the first day of school--there was a holler down about a half quarter east of the school house--the teacher, of course, would get up and make a talk, and then she would pick out two of the biggest boys and tell them to go down to that holler and cut her three to four switches. Of course, they was always glad to get out of there. Well they would go down and cut three to four switches, and she would set them in the corner, cause she needed one of them. They didn't do, like they do nowdays. When they didn't behave, they was called up there, and she would wear a switch out on them. They behaved pretty good after that. The first elementary teacher we had was a man by the name of Elmer Bredth, and the high school teacher was a lady by the name of Lena Rue. I can remember I got into a big fight, and this elementary teacher, Elmer Bredth, told me that I was to stay in noon and recess for two weeks . . . in the meantime he made me learn my multiplication tables through to 12's. I thought at the time he was really abusing me, but I changed my mind about that (Buster Summers).

Regardless of the disciplinary measures, school children still pulled tricks on the teachers and each other as well.

Going to school, we played ball, and whipcrack. You usually had to pull that on a newcomer, when a boy moved in, and they would come the first day. They was kids then going to school up to 20 and 21 years old, wasn't out of the 8th grade. Well, these big boys, they would get together, and the would be at the head of the whipcrack. Some of them would be 20 years old, and then it would come on down to where they wasn't 10 years old, and they might have one of them down here on the end that might not be 7 or 8 years old. The schoolhouse set on kind of a hill and run down the hill there for half quarter of a mile. Well, them big ones would get at the end and there would be maybe 20 in the bunch and have this little one that they was breaking in have him on the end. Well we would run down that hill as fast as we could. These big ones up here would stop and let these other ones come on around; and, when they would come around so far they was getting pretty fast, they would throw that little one about as far from here to the wall, and that was whipcrack (Reuben Ross).

Buster Summers remembered joining in a prank which got him and his companions in trouble.

I'll tell you a story, that happened to me about a girl, Bernice Wade. We got to smoking and thought it was fun, roll our own, hidious looking things; but we would manage to get a few puffs off it, and she tattled on us. This teacher, Ms. Lena Rue, was giving us a pretty hard time about our smoking; so, we decided that this Ralph McClain and I did that, we would give her a good paddling for tattling on us. We were going to paddle her behind. Well, when you came out of school, you went north and you came east, or else you could cut across. So we decided we were going to catch her down there in this hollow east of the schoolhouse and paddle her canoe one afternoon. I could outrun the McClain boy, and I attempted to run across and catch this girl so we could work her over and she could outrun us. This went on for three or four days and we got tired of that. So we, this Ralph McClain had a brother Harry that got out about ten minutes before we did and he was small, but we told him to go down there and cut a couple of maple switches and catch her, and hold her till we could get there. He caught her, and she was just on the verge of getting loose and I was there and I got ahold of her. I could hold her and Ralph came and we took one hand, one of her hands and each one of our hands; and, we paddled her with those switches. The next morning, she brought a note from her mother about what had happened. Then we had to stay in school till she walked from the schoolhouse and got out of sight over this hill. It would take her about 20 minutes to make that walk; and, we got tired of that, so we told her we wouldn't do it again. Those are things you can remember you got involved in. No one ever told my parents that this happened, and no one raised a great big stink about it. If that had happened in this day and age, I'll guarantee you that you would have been in a reform school and the juvenile authorities would have had ahold of you. I don't think kids generally speaking were any worse than they ever were. I think the grown ups raise more stink about it. That is my honest opinion.

A favorite type of activity involved finding ways to stay out of school. One student had an interesting excuse.

They had a windmill that pumped the water up to their house upstairs so they would have water, and then an overflow pipe that run right out to the barn, so it would water the stock. If the windmill would get to pumping too fast and they were gone, the overflow pipe wasn't big enough to take care of it. It would run that tank over; and, sometimes you would open the door, and the water would come

out the kitchen door at you cause it wouldn't carry it. Well, he would go home, I don't know if he turned the windmill on or off purpose or what, he would go home and find that water in the room, and he come back over and get me, and we would get two, three girls and ask them to come over and help mop it up. We would have a big time of mopping that water up and taking care of that house. (we would) get out of school, gone two to three hours maybe, or pretty near half day (Hugh Martin).

Playing jokes on the teachers was an enjoyable passtime.

This Georgy Shewy I was telling you about I liked, well she had a Model T Ford she drove to school. She drove team most of the time, but she had a Model T Ford she drove some; and in the cold weather she would back it up there at the corner of the school. There was a cloak room that come out on the school building and left a kind of corner on the southeast corner, and she would back it up there where it would be warm and the sun would shine on it. Out of cracker jacks, they use to have surprises in them, they do yet I guess, anyway a lot of times, they had a little whistle, just a little old thing you could put it in your mouth and make it blow or suck in. So, we took one of those things one day and took a piece of board and drove it in her tail pipe while it was sitting back in that building. She came out and started her old Model T, and it just whistled three, four times. Then it got too big a power and blowed it out, and it hit the side of the building and sounded like a shot gun went off. She didn't know what in the world had happened to it. We use to jack their car wheels up, just get them to clear the ground enough, so as they thought they had an axle broke. They would get in it and go to starting them old Model T's, pushing on the clutch. Of course, the wheel was spinning because it was up off the ground about that far; and, if we could get around where we could before they could get out for a chance to see, give them a little push; and, of course, it would take off and the block would fall out, and everything was all right. We use to do that even to old fellows in town. We was pretty onry, nothing mean, but pretty onry (Hugh Martin).

Robin Lewis recounted an experience he and his friends had pulling a prank on the high school superintendent.

There is a lot of things I could have reminded him of. One of the things I reminded him of was when we hooked an old door knob up to a Model T coil. We was in physics class, the kids had gotten noisy down there. They were storming through the halls just like a bunch of cattle, and he would just give us heck. He would have an assembly day after day trying to get us to quiet down, finally the kids got quiet. We were in physics class doing something. We had an old Model T coil there that we were having a little fun out of. We got to thinking it would be a little fun to hook up the coil to that old doorknob.

We wired her up and was sitting waiting for somebody; and, all at once, somebody come a storming through the hall. We knew it couldn't be Kramer because he was really putting them down, he made more racket than the kids made. The old boy grabbed ahold of that doorknob, shoved the rope, and banged her back, banged that blackboard two or three times. We thought he was going to tear it off the hinges. By the time he really got settled down, hisself, we were back in our seats, like nice little gentlemen, you know, three of us; and, he didn't look either direction, by golly, when he opened that door, he came right on in, and walked up there to the three of us, and he says, 'I don't know, I think I can whip the three of you bastards that done that.' We didn't say 'yes,' 'no,' or anything else; because, if we had opened our mouths, he would have done it right there. Oh, man, that man was mad. That was about '31 I guess when that happened.

Consolidated school districts brought an end to the country schools.

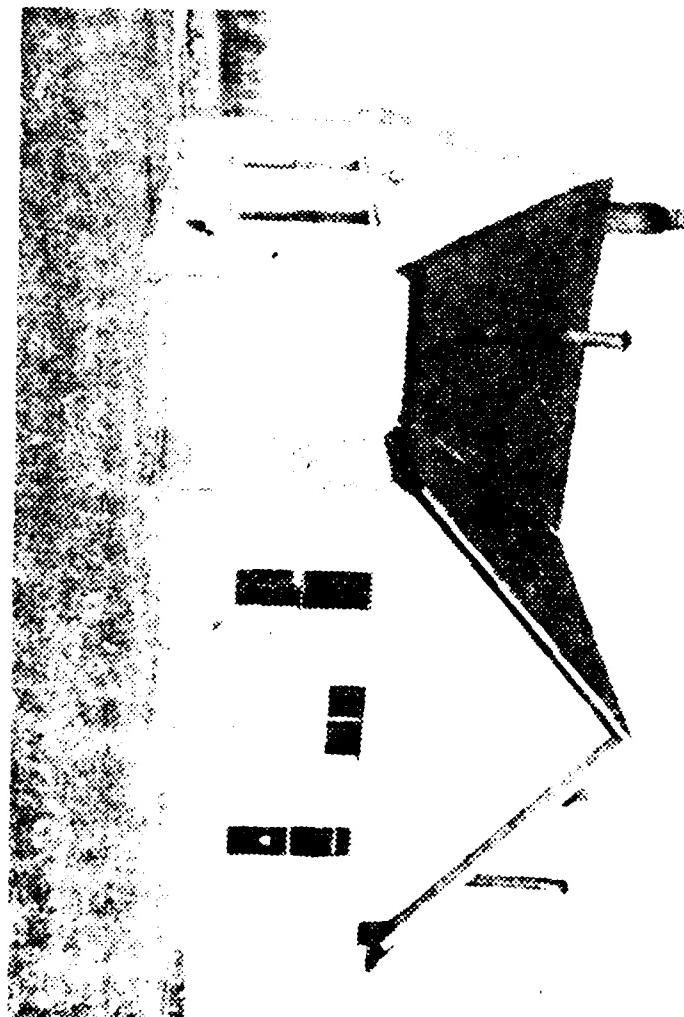
It dwindled down, and finally we went into Smithville, the District went into Smithville. So then they sold the old school house, and it was tore down (Virgil Bainbridge).

In the town of Paradise back about 1964, '65, or '66, sometime in there, this school district became a part of the Smithville school district; and we didn't have school here any more. The reason we went to Smithville was we were only having six grades of school, but we only had 13 youngsters in those six grades; and, by the way, I was on the school board at that time. In fact, I wound up serving about 25 years on the school board. We couldn't see how we were providing the proper education for youngsters when there were no more of them; so, we went to Smithville, it became a part of Smithville. Right now, a bus comes from Smithville and picks up the youngsters in Paradise; and I think he picks up 34 to 35 youngsters from Paradise (Buster Summers).

School buses have provided the transportation need which once was met by ponies, buggies, sleds, and Model T's. Current day teachers need college degrees for certification and are assigned to one class or grade. However, many of those who grew up in the project area feel their education is equal to if not better than that of the modern system.

I was farther ahead from that country school than when we moved to town (Robin Lewis).

Figure 2.
Trimble School House. Courtesy of the State
Historical Society of Missouri.



CHORES

Besides memories of schoolday activities and entertainment, residents in the Smithville Lake region recalled tasks they were expected to perform as children. Most of the chores were required during the pre-teen years after which age more strenuous occupations were assigned to the young people.

There was always something to do, I can promise you that. Dad aimed to keep we boys busy. You had to run errands for your mother till you got big enough to work in a field or carry a hoe and chop weeds out of corn (Eugene Arthur).

One typical chore involved helping provide for the family heating system.

The first thing I done was picked up chips and packed in wood when I got big enough (to) do anything. I would pick them up to make a fire with the next morning in the stove. My dad cut wood, and it was my job--I was the littlest one--I had to pick up chips and bring in to make a fire. That was the first thing I remember because I got a whipping over it. I didn't want to do it. (When) I got big enough, I went to carrying wood and then cutting wood and stuff like that. When I got 12 years old I went to working out (Roy Bailey).

Working with the livestock and chickens was an assignment which farm children fulfilled frequently.

I helped feed the chickens and gather up the eggs, and I might take in the oat bucket when (my father) would come in from the field. I would meet him at the barn with the milk bucket for him to milk the cows. As a child, I really didn't have a lot of chores, as I remember (Frances Orr).

I had to drive up the cows and, after I got big enough to help, milked, such things as that. (I'd) maybe pack a little corn to the chickens, ride a horse. We done a lot of that horseback riding those days (Claud Porter).

My first show of chores was just ordinary farm chores; feeding the horses, cows, carrying water, chores (Willard Payton).

When I come home from school, I always had chores to do, wood carrying, cows to milk, and (my brother) the same way (Virgil Bainbridge).

Assisting one's mother, particularly with gardening and errand running, was an important job.

You had to carry in wood, hoe the garden, help Mom take care of the garden. I don't remember my father ever working in the garden over a few minutes at a time (Eugene Arthur).

I was always the one around home that helped my mother. I was around the house much more than my older brother. He helped Dad in the field, and I would help Mother with the cooking, keeping and taking care of the garden, taking care of the chickens and that type of thing, going to town to get groceries, hitching up a horse to the buggy, and driving up to Paradise, buying groceries. This was my main job till I was probably 15, 16 years old (Benton Summers).

Keeping a smooth running farm operation often depended on the participation of the children.

(One job was) seeing that the old milk cow was up at night so my dad could milk. Ever since I can remember I had chores, night and morning; and I did that before I went to school and after I come home from school. From the time I can remember, I got up in the barn loft and put hay down for the horses and put that in the managers. Each horse then was fed so much corn, oats, maybe both; and that was my job to see that it was in the manger, so (when) my dad come home from work, all he would have to do was unharness and water his team. They would go in the barn and eat, and he had his milking to do and his hogs to feed and his cows to look after and that type of thing. I can't remember having less than one and a half hour's chores of a morning and the same at night (Buster Summers).

Sheep and chickens at the Edwards' farm relied on Jesse Edwards completing his chores for their food.

My first chores was feeding the sheep when I was a kid. We shelled the corn on a hand corn sheller, and I shelled corn for my mother's chickens. It was all ear corn. You just stuck the whole ear down in there, and the corn would come out of one place and the cob in another. You turned a crank just like you would turn a grindstone. It just revolved in there, and that knocked the grain off the cob. That was all there was to it. The cob went on through, and the corn dropped down. It wouldn't take very long to shell a bushel of corn, 120 ears to a bushel.

It wouldn't take me over 25 to 30 minutes. That would take care of probably 20 to 30 head of sheep in the wintertime. Of course that was the only time you fed them grain was in the winter.

Whether their jobs were crucial elements for the family lifestyle or just activities to keep them busy, many of the children had assigned duties. These experiences were no doubt helpful in preparing the children for adulthood in perpetrating the work ethic common to American society.

I did not have any chores that I remember that just had to be done. Just little chores, maybe not too important, just trying to teach me the value of work (Don Breckenridge).

FARMING

The area included in the impact zone of the Smithville Dam project has subsisted on a predominantly agrarian economy for many years. Numerous residents come from long lines of farming families. Raising crops and livestock requires not only daily activities but also jobs such as threshing, plowing, transporting livestock, and numerous other tasks which are performed during specific times and seasons of the year. Many of the annual events drew members of the community together with one family helping another in exchange for assistance on their farms.

Meals were an important part of farm life. Large quantities of food were prepared to fuel the farmhands for the strenuous activities required of them.

In the summertime, particularly, there was always getting up, preparing breakfast. That was done early in the morning so that the men around the house, that were going to go into the field to plow corn or cut the hay or cut the wheat or oats or whatever it was, so they could get out early. We would prepare the breakfast. I would always help mother with breakfast. We had biscuits every morning, fried steak, fried chicken, or fried ham, always some kind of a meat, always made a gravy, pretty near always. We had fried eggs for breakfast and then the beverage. Dad always had coffee; mother drank tea; and, best as I can remember, I always drank tea. I never did care for the brewed coffee. We would buy the coffee in beans and grind it in the coffee grinder. I think my sister Opel has that coffee grinder still. After breakfast, you would clean up the dishes. If the garden needed hoeing, you would get out and hoe the garden. We always had young chickens to take care of. Shortly after breakfast, (we'd) feed them. Then we would prepare the noon meal. I would help in preparing the meal, after breakfast was far enough along, to pick beans, green beans. You would go to the garden and pick enough green beans or peas or whatever, cabbage, if it was far enough along. You would cut a head of cabbage so you could have slaw for dinner. Later in the summer, when the potatoes got far enough along to dig, you would go out and dig you a mess of potatoes and prepare the dinner meal. In the afternoon, after the dishes were clean, more was (done) to taking care of the garden or whatever needed to be done. Normally Mother didn't cook an evening meal. It

was more or less to eat the left-overs from dinner. Preparation of the food was always (such) that you had quite a bit left; because, people at that time ate a lot, and we always prepared a lot, and you always had some left over for the evening meal. If we were short, I can remember preparing something for the evening meal. Before the evening meal, which we called supper, we would milk the cows, get the cows in. After I got older, dad and the field hands were working horses and mules, and I got to the place where I would get the hay in the mangers for the horses, (and) have the oats in the troughs. If we gave them corn, that would all be prepared when the field hands would come in. All they ha' to do then was unharness the horses, water them, and put them in there. I never did do any milking at that time. Dad always did the milking, so he would either milk before supper (or) milk after supper, and that was about it. Half an hour later, hour later, you were in bed trying to get some rest for the next day. I know many, many times we were in the field working by 5:00 or 6:00 (Benton Summers).

Older children usually helped with the farm work; however some gained employment on other farms. Being a farm hand required hard work and was not a lucrative profession.

I tell you, I worked for a man two years by the name of Sarton Coons for 75 cents a day plowing corn with a walking cultivator and a pair of mules. It wasn't no eight hour stuff, it was from sun up to sun down, 75 cents a day (Willard Payton).

I just worked out there for the farmers. The first year I worked out I got my board and 50 cents a day, working on the farm. That was from sun up to sun down, you didn't pay any attention to a watch. The next year, that was in 1913, I got 60 cents, a dime raise, working at another place. I worked several years that way, at 60 cents a day; and then later on, around 1914, I got a \$1.50 a day, but I was boarding myself. I was living right close there to the fellow that I was working for. I went on and worked for him two, three years; and then along '16, I went to work for another fellow on the farm (Reuben Ross).

Local farmers raised the same crops for the most part. Grain was produced for sale and also as feed for the livestock.

(I grew) oats, wheat and corn. I raised practically all of my feed. Of course, there was some feed I had to buy (Willard Payton).

Corn and wheat and oats in themdays was the main crop. Since then they have got into soybeans. They didn't know what soybeans was then. Corn, wheat, and of course they raised alfalfa and quite a lot of red clover. Instead of

buying fertilizer, they sold red clover. They would run that clover a couple of years and it was ready for corn (Reuben Ross).

Willard Payton explained the reason for planting clover.

One reason we raised oats, one of the reasons was that you sowed red clover themdays to build up your land. We would raise two crops of corn and then we sow it in oats and clover. Well the clover would build up the ground again. Well, nowadays, you never see a piece of clover no place; they use fertilizer.

Some farmers were innovative when it came to crop selection.

Frances Orr recalled her father's construction of machinery to handle a new type of produce.

He raised wheat, oats, corn, and livestock. My father was one of the first men to harvest blue grass, and he made his own blue grass stripper. It would have probably been about 1913 or 1914. It was a drum type thing that had the head of the nails on the inside of the drum and the points on the outer side. As it turned, it beat the seed out and threw them back into a basin at the back of that. Now, the selling of sod is quite a business; but at that time, blue grass seed was quite (new). He stripped maybe like 50 acres of his own, and then he would strip for all the neighbors on the shares (using) that horse drawn piece of machinery. After I got old enough, it was my job, when he would stop, to help him take the seed out of the box and put it in big gunny sacks. My mother would sew up the sack, and then he would ship them to Peppard or Rudy Package Seed Company in Kansas City. Most of the time they were hauled from Paradise to the railroad station at Trimble and put on a train and sent there. In later years, they were trucked in.

Another plant which had a period of popularity was alfalfa.

My father was the second person in Platte County that ever had any alfalfa. It was about 1908 or '09. I think I was about nine years old. That was a new crop at that time. I know Mr. McCommus had the first. This alfalfa, I don't know, they were raising it in the east and probably in the north some. He sent and got it from some seed company, but I don't remember where. After he had it about six months, my father saw it; and he decided he wanted it. So we put in three acres, and that was right close to where this Buffalo Park is. You could cut it about four times a year. The kind of hay we had then was mostly (for) horses. There was no kind of machinery then. You used it for horses and mules. Most of the hay at that time was timothy or you used clover for fertilizer. This alfalfa was deep rooted, and there was some roots known to grow 20 feet in the ground. It was a bunch of grass, and people didn't use it much for horses; but, they used it for cattle, sheep, mostly. You

cut it about four times a year. The first cutting was about May 20, and about every six weeks you could cut a crop of alfalfa. For a number of years it got to be one of the stable crops in this country; but, now in the later years, since people has got to using commercial fertilizer and all, you don't see many alfalfa fields in this country here anymore. There is very few. Most of the hay crops in this country now is brome or orchard grass. It wasn't very long till different ones would order it. It wasn't over two, three years 'till practically all the farmers had an acreage of alfalfa on their place; because it was a very productive crop for cattle and sheep. But they still stayed with the timothy 'till brome come along. They stayed with the timothy as long as they used horses (Jesse Edwards).

Frequent maintenance was necessary for raising grain.

Herbicides were necessary to protect the fields from weeds.

Bind weed, that killed your crops. Well, it got into (my father's) corn field, it was pretty bad. It makes your soil unproductive. Well, I went with him, and a wheelbarrow was our main thing when we wasn't using horses. He would (pour) the solution in there in big buckets and go to these bare spots and spray it. I'd go with him. He got it whipped before it did much harm, but the soil was not productive for maybe two years after you had put this on it to kill the weed (Nannie Payton).

Hugh Martin remembered a job he had:

Running what they called a go-devil. It is kind of a sled thing. It runs on listed corn and has six discs, three on each side behind, (and) throws the dirt into this corn. It is listed corn it works on. They would plant it down here in the furrow, and you got these high ridges down here and you work these ridges down over the corn. That was one of my first jobs for two or three years.

Farmers listed corn, that is planted corn in ridges, for various reasons.

There is two, three different things. It would stand up better in wind and storm because it has more braces to it, pour more dirt to it, and give more roots to it. Also, it will stand dry weather better. It also has its disadvantages, too; so I don't know (Hugh Martin).

Prior to the use of modern machinery, grain was harvested by hand.

Well, he cradled the grain, oats and wheat. It looks like a scythe only it has the prongs of wood that the grain tosses into. I remember watching him do that, I didn't help. It caught itself. It went along just like a scythe, and this thing on the back caught it. Then you unloaded it, and then you have to either feed it that way or stomp it out or something (Nannie Payton).

Once a year, after cutting the crops, the farmers faced the large task of gathering the harvest and preparing it for sale or for their own use.

One summer I was back and helped dad run a combine. One summer, it might have been the same summer, we bailed a lot of hay. The old type where you drag the hay up through the bailer, and you pitch it in with a pitch fork. So we worked together on that one summer (Benton Summers).

Hay bailers, good Lord, we had hay bailers, stationery bailer. They were run by horse power. When the plunger came back, there was a man stood up there and jumped on that hay and pushed it down in there and got out before the plunger come in and grabbed him and pushed it down with his foot. I don't recall anyone mentioning an accident. The machine run real slow (Buster Summers).

The horses were attached to a boom which operated the bailer.

(The) team made one circle and got two plunger licks in each circle. There was a thing there that had two rollers on it and made two strokes to each (turn) (Eugene Arthur).

The clover yield was processed "in the fall of the year" (Clyde Taylor). This activity differed in several ways from hay bailing and threshing but did require team effort.

You couldn't hardly start clover hulling till afternoon. It had to be perfectly dry. It would be about four, five sleds that you hauled the stuff in. You would haul the stuff in on sleds to keep from scattering the seed out and losing it. It was just an old sled with two runners on it. Kind of a hay frame like thing on it. About a 7 by 12, the hay frame part would be about 7-feet wide and 12-feet long. The old sled would be only about 16 to 18 inches high. They mowed it and put it into little piles. The man that run this sled, he pitched it on the sled; and, when he got a pretty good jag on it--he'd never tromp it--he would walk along there and drive the team up to the old machine and throw it in the machine. While he was throwing that one in, someone else was loading out there and kept coming with it. They (run) it by hand, feed that stuff in there by hand, and it would go through the threshing cylinder. That broke the heads off and threshed part of it. From there it would come down in through another cylinder, called that the hulling cylinder. It is a rasp, coarser than a horse rasp. The rasp was on a concave about half way around that cylinder and they was also rasps on the cylinder. They would go down in between that, and it would rub the husk off and out come the thresh with seeds (Clyde Taylor).

The purpose of this operation was to retrieve the clover seeds.

There wasn't any clover hay that came out of it. It was dust. It was just ground up. There was just a little bit of food value to it, but (they) didn't pay much attention to it, most of them just threwed it away. It took the clover and put it in small bunches, and (it) would get kind of powdery like. The straw would half rot and dry and run through this machine. (It) would take the seed out of the heads and run it through the weed cleaner, and you would have your clover seed (Clyde Taylor).

The main annual chore in the community was performed on the wheat and oat crop during threshing season.

Threshing would sometimes start in June and go to September, and sometimes it would be the 4th of July and go to September (Clyde Taylor).

Group effort by neighbors was required for this operation, but the farmers relied on the machinery which was provided by the Taylor family for many years.

Started threshing in 1902, and we wound up in 1951. I have seen more bundles pitched than anybody living, I think (Clyde Taylor).

Each farm family received assistance from several others in exchange for helping the others when they had their days with the threshing machine.

About all we would be involved in would be about eight, nine different farmers. Then when they got out of our area, the people that we traded with, why, then a whole new crew came in; and they had eight, nine people that they had to help. It was hard work, but nobody minded; because, that was all we knew to work hard and do everything we did the hard way. You traded help with everyone, and you take everyone, most everyone, would have a day or two threshing. So we have threshed two days and we are going to getthrough (at) this man's place, oh, say 10:00; and then move to a new man. Well, the new man, they furnished the dinner to us, you see. It was something getting everything syncronised, but everybody had been at it long enough that they realized the way things was agoing (Buster Summers).

What would happen, 15 or 20 farmers would get together and help each other. There wasn't any pay for work except the farmer would have to pay the man that had the threshing machine so much a bushel to harvest the grain. All the neighboring farmers would come in and the threshing season lasted a long time. The farmers for several miles around would come through and help each other. You lined up enough--you helped enough--to get enough help to do yours (Charlie Taylor).

You would not only do your own threshing, but you would help everyone in the community. So you helped them, and they helped you, and you would have enough help to get it done (Benton Summers).

Certain preparations were necessary before the threshing team arrived.

Early in the summer you use the binders and bind all the grain shocking. I was just a little bitty kid then, but I helped shock wheat, oats. They leave it in the shocks until it got to be your turn in the threshing circuit. Then all these people would drive their bundle wagons and their pitching crews and come in and load up the shocks on the bundle wagons and haul them to the threshing machine (Charlie Taylor).

Individual farms had the threshing service according to a schedule.

They would begin at one corner of the run and kept working their way around (Eugene Arthur).

We always started around (where) the Trimble Wildlife area is and came down this road straight north of Paradise and came down in here and get off over east and swing back to the north. They would thresh a month I expect, and eventually they would get back in the Mecca area. The first thing you know, it was all over for that summer (Buster Summers).

Farm helpers and the machine operators moved from place to place.

The farmer furnished all the help and put this grain, straw, and stuff to the thresher. We would run it through the thresher and run it out into his wagon. We moved from farm to farm. We would move the thing in and set it and thresh him out and then move to the next farm (Clyde Taylor).

They move in and thresh everybody's in the territory. Of course, I could remember letting fences down to pull the threshing machine from one farm to another one because the gates were too small to get them through. Or maybe they'd have to drive around by the road (Charlie Taylor).

The total amount of threshing done varied from year to year. Because some years some of them would raise wheat and maybe the next year, they would put into something else (Evalyn Taylor).

We would just thresh sometimes down to 25 to 30,000 bushels and sometimes we would get 75 to 80,000 bushels (Clyde Taylor).

Cost for this service differed according to the type of grain being threshed.

We charged from about 3 cents to about 7 cents a bushel for threshing his wheat, his oats from about 2 to 3½ cents a bushel (Clyde Taylor).

The general procedure was remembered by Buster Summers.

The Taylors at Mecca did at least 99 percent of the threshing (that) was (done) in this area. They had a steam engine and a great big threshing machine that had been built to their specifications. (It had a) 32-inch cylinder and it was a big outfit. It took eight to nine bundle wagons and five pitchers to keep it going. When you drove up to the side of that separator, . . . it would eat those bundles and thresh them just as fast as you could throw them in there. Of course, there was a system to it, the way they wanted you to do it; but it would just flat eat those bundles. Our wheat here never did make what it did in Kansas; but we have had good wheat, and we have had good oats (Buster Summers).

Threshing required a full day's work.

Sometimes you couldn't get started too early in the morning because of the dew and threshed till dark (Eugene Arthur).

The farmers and the threshers got up very early, even on the days when there was lot of dew. There would be things that they would have to do before hand (Evalyn Taylor).

The threshing machine necessitated preliminary attention.

They always saw that their machinery was oiled and that the belts were all laced. There was lots of care that had to be given to the machinery before they could ever start the threshing (Evalyn Taylor).

(A belt lacing) is a piece of leather about as thick as an ordinary shoe, the top of it. We would split that out of half a side at a time, and we would split that about 3/8 of an inch wide with a special knife. We would cut it even. You have to punch holes in it about a quarter inch in diameter, and you would go through holes on one end of your belt and down underneath and up through and lace it through. Sometimes you would go back through it again to make it stronger. In later years, we used wire, just ordinary wire about like a broom wire; and then we used what they called an alligator lace. It looked kind of like an alligator's mouth, and you put it on a belt and drove it in with a hammer (Clyde Taylor).

For a farmer, the first job involved transporting the grain to the machine.

My dad got me up and put me on a wagon with a team of mules, bundle wagon. I would be (to the field) by 7:00. As soon as it got dry enough, why some pitcher--we called them a pitcher--they throwed the bundles on the wagon. Then I had to pile them in such a manner that you could get to the threshing machine. You did that all day. About the average number of loads that you (would) make in a day would be around ten loads. Then when you got through, well you threshed till dark, if it was dry (Buster Summers).

Pitchers and drivers were needed for this part of the process.

The farmer would ordinarily get about eight bundle wagons. The bundle wagon hauls the grain in from the field to the thresher. They would have about four pitchers out in the field to pitch the stuff on these wagons. The man that run the bundle wagon would pitch it into the machine, ordinarily. A bundle would run about eight inches in diameter where the band was tied around. Of course, they would be spraddled out on each end. (Bundles weighed) I'd be satisfied to say, about 12 to 15 pounds, that is straw, grain and all. He threw it into the carrier on the feeder. When we first started threshing, we fed it by hand. (On) the old hand feed, a man stood there and cut the bands with a pocket knife and shoved it over to the feeder, and the feeding man, he would push it into the cylinder. (On a self-feeding machine), a man pitches it onto a carrier, and the carrier traded up under some knives and cut the bands and poked it into this cylinder and threshed it out. That was the whole theory of that. The ordinary threshing machine just has one cylinder. It is a threshing cylinder. It knocks the grain out of the heads and in the process goes on down into the riddles. The fan blows this chaffing stuff out, and the grain comes out in an auger and elevates up there and knocks it into the wagon (Clyde Taylor).

Packing the bundles for a safe trip to the machine took some skill.

I have had my bundles loaded up and had everything just looking so-so and hit the wrong kind of a place with the front end of your wagon. When everything got straightened out, you was on the ground, the bundles was on top of you, and you had all that to load up again. (There were) lots of accidents (Buster Summers).

Numerous people were needed for the threshing operation. The machine itself required a team.



Figure 3.
Hay Wagon Crossing the Old Wagon Bridge.
Courtesy of Lucille Taylor.

Two men (were) on the separator, and one man (was) on the steam engine and one man hauled water. That would be the four threshing machine men (Clyde Taylor).

The farmer needed more help.

There would be 20 to 25 men at the threshing crews (Irene Brekenridge).

Buster Summers described a typical threshing scene.

You took the crew of men that you had taking care of the separators, keeping it agoing with bundles; as I say (there were) about nine wagons; and they was two wagons unloaded at the same time, one on each side of the feeder. The straw was loaded up into a pile. Neighbor women would help cook, and seems to me like sometimes you would have 20 people, 20 men. You had people that was hauling grain to the barn and scooping it . . . in their bins and so forth. They put it in, two bushel to the sack; and when they got through threshing it, they covered it up with straw.

Feeding the threshing team was the responsibility of the farmer; but, as with the threshing itself, neighbors helped each other.

The women played a big part in the threshing back in those days. The neighbors all got together, and they would help each other with the dinner. They would start early and dress chickens. Usually, they had fried chicken and beef roast, they would be (the) main meats that they would have. Then, of course, they would have all kinds of garden vegetables and lots and lots of pies. Men always like pies better than they did cakes, but they would have cakes too. Then when the threshing machine would move from one farm to the next one, then the women would all go and help that lady of the house with her meal. Everybody was in, and, of course, the children of the family were always there, and it was quite an occasion for them (Evalyn Taylor).

Children helped with the meal also. Irene Breckenridge recalled her assignment.

My job mainly was to have a maple switch or something to keep the flies off. I was pretty small of course. I really didn't get to eat anything, I would pretty near starve to death till I would; you know, they wouldn't let us eat ahead of time.

The amount of food and drink served was memorable.

I will tell you, nobody got up from the threshing table hungry; (or) if he did, it was his own fault. Those dinners were something you just can't imagine. They had meat, potatoes, green beans, peas. All the things we had for dinner came right out of the garden. There wasn't any

of it bought. Ice tea, I had a brother that could drink a half gallon of tea every day at noon; and another man that helped us all the time, Roscoe Harris, my brother and him used to see which one could drink the most tea. There was always women available and helped anybody that wanted anything. We always had big, good meals (Buster Summers).

With the cost and work involved with feeding the threshers, invariably some people would try to shirk their obligations.

There was always one or two on the bunch, families, that would always try to get them done before dinner, so they could send them on (Eugene Arthur).

Buster Summers explained how this was accomplished.

They tried to maneuver things so you would get through with their place either at night or the next morning, 8:00, 9:00, so someone else could cook dinner for him. Everyone knew it was going to happen that way when you started.

A day's work covered a good deal of ground. "I would say 20 acres, maybe 30" (per day) (Buster Summers). Besides the camaraderie, one of the most clear impressions was of the heat.

Everybody had a lot of fun; but we worked hard; and it was always hot weather, around the 4th of July, when all this began (or) was prior to that (Buster Summers).

The worst day I ever spent threshing, the worst, was down at George Simms. Hot, my land, threshed way back over there across the road; and there was two of us hauling grain. Anyway, I had a little span of mules, and I could haul more grain with my little span of mules than his big old team, (they) could stand the hot weather (Eugene Arthur).

Besides fighting the heat, the farm animals also caused another type of accident.

(Since the) machine made a lot of noise and (there was) a lot of activity up around there, invariably every threshing scene-time, somebody would have a team of horses or a team of mules run off. That was always fun to watch, but it wasn't any fun to the guy that was trying to get them stopped (Buster Summers).

At the end of the day the farmers and the threshing machine men separated. The farm hands returned to their homes.

I would drive my team (of) mules and wagon home, and it was dark as pitch. My dad would bring the lantern and come to the barn, and we would unload the mules or unharness the team and water them and feed them. (We'd) go to the house and eat supper, take a bath and go to bed, get up the next morning and do the same thing over (Buster Summers).

The owners and operators of the threshing machine remained in the field.

We stayed with the machine. We would sleep right out there with it (Clyde Taylor).

Once the grain had been separated from the stem by the threshing operation, each part of the plant was processed in a different manner.

Your straw went out in a big straw pile; and then, after it was all over, there was a bailer, an old stationary bailer (that) would pull up alongside the straw stack. You'd wire-tie all the straw in the pile for your straw supply (Charlie Taylor).

The grain was placed in bags.

You did a lot of sacking, whole sacks. We would put two bushel of wheat in a sack, and then we would tie it and stack those sacks. Very often we rented those gunny sacks. They were expensive to buy, and you could rent them for a penny or two apiece, as I remember it. It may have been more; but, as I remember, when we started, you could rent them for a penny. Later I think they were two cents or maybe three cents. You would accumulate them, over the years you accumulated them. If you had your own sacks, (then) before threshing, you had a patching session spending several evenings going through those to see if they had any holes in them so that the wheat wouldn't roll out. (You would) cut you off a square and put in over that hole, take you a darning needle and sew it up (Benton Summers).

After finishing the threshing at one place, the machine crew moved on to another site; however, the farmer whose grain had just been threshed had a different task.

From 1912, '13, '14, '15, on up to the first World War, we had a farm two miles north here in Clinton County; and Dad had that in wheat. We would haul that wheat to Trimble. That was about the only time then that I was in Trimble. The trip was five, six miles, I guess. Of course, the only thing we had then was horses and wagons. We'd put 40 to 50 bushel of wheat on the wagon and take it up there. They had an elevator, and you would weigh this wheat when you got there. You would go down to the elevator and empty the sacks and take your sacks and wagon back up and get it weighed again. One trip a day, usually, there were as many as five, six wagons helping, getting them in as quick as they could after it was threshed (Benton Summers).

As soon as they could, they would haul it to Edgerton and sell it (or) haul it to Smithville. They would take 60 bushel, but it was a day's trip to Edgerton and back and



Figure 4.
Typical Threshing Scene. Courtesy of
Smithville Historical Society.

load up again. It took a good while to haul maybe 700 to 900 bushel of wheat, depending on how many acres you had. My Dad always raised a lot of wheat, and we always had a lot of acres, and as I very well remember we always had a lot of wheat to haul. Later, in the '30's, early '30's I would say, why we had grain trucks. Then we quit hauling it. They hauled it; and they would haul it to Edgerton, Smithville, and Platte City (Buster Summers).

In the early days, much of the machinery utilized for plowing, planting, bailing, and hauling was powered by animals. Both horses and mules fulfilled this purpose. Farmers have definite ideas about which type of animal they prefer.

I liked mules the best. I worked more mules than I did horses, I just like mules better than I did horses (Roy Bailey).

I usually worked horses, once in awhile we had a mule or two; but I usually used horses. I don't like mules (Hugh Martin).

I preferred working mules. (My Father) had a team of mares that I first remember, but he usually worked them. As a boy, I usually worked the mules (Jesse Edwards).

Various types of mules and horses were used in the area. We had every kind, as far as that goes. We raised most of our horses. Some of them were out of driving mares. Some of them were out of draft mares. (We) had all different kinds of horses (Hugh Martin).

Back in the earlier days, they had workhorses. The first mules we had was standard bred. I was about eight, nine years old. My father had a stud he bought in Maloy, Iowa; and he was a Percheron horse. Then my father kept the jacks and service mares. Then most people went to raising mules from the draft horses, because they was heavier than mules. Most of the lighter mules that we had in themdays, they called them cotton mules. They tended to the cotton fields. They were small, but they would still pull a double shovel or five-tooth plow and plow cotton. If you had a bigger mule for that, they were more active than those cotton mules. They used the heavier draft mules for heavier work like discing, plowing, and stuff like that. Then in later years, they wanted heavier studs; so most of them went into the draft. They was a heavier breed. They was the Percheron horses and Belgians and Shires and Clydsdales (Jesse Edwards).

Jesse Edwards explained the requirements for breeding mules. You have to have a jack ass, of course. Spanish jenny you know. The small ones are burros and the others are jacks. You cross them on a horse, and them were the only two animals that would produce. The mare to a jack, that is called a mule - if you cross them the other way, they

aren't quite as active, they have shorter ears, you call it a hinny. You could breed a horse to a jenny. A jack and a jenny are a female donkey. You can breed to the donkey, too.

The debate between horse lovers and those who favor mules leads the participants to cite attributes of their own preference. Each side tends to contradict the other.

I liked mules all right after you got them hooked up and got them to working, but they are kind of ornery, drag around, lead them around. The durn things you can't trust them, they will kick you or do anything. I was more partial to horses (Hugh Martin).

A mule is very trustworthy. A lot of people think that you have to abuse a mule to get their attention. That is not so. I have got a mule up there, now she is about 20 years old; and I would trust her farther than any horse in this country. I have got three granddaughters from 13, 12, and 9; and they all three can get on that mule and work her single downtown. She has been down the main street of Kansas City, and she was the first to pull a two-wheel buggy to Benjamin Stables. She pulled a two-wheel buggy across 435 where you come across. Benjamin Stables is out there. When they opened that they wanted a horse drawn vehicle to cross it first; and of course, Missouri was always known for mules. They took Ruthie, this mule--I named her after Festus' mule on Gunsmoke. She will work single, she will work double, she will work on either side or in the middle if you want her (Jesse Edwards).

There is some disagreement about the difference in life spans between the two animals.

The average life is usually longer than the horse. I have known some mules in this country to live to the ripe age of 37 years old. There is not very many horses that makes it that many years (Jesse Edwards).

Some mules live till they're 21, 22 years old. The best part of a mule is when he is five years old till he is nine. When he gets over nine, mule gets kind of sluggish. He ain't got the spirit the young one has, but up to nine he is a good work mule. A horse, he will live 30 years. He will go to where a mule wouldn't. When a mule starts going down hill, he starts pretty fast; but a horse, he will last till he is 16 or 17 years old (Roy Bailey).

While horses are said to have superior pulling ability, mules are noted for their endurance.

A horse is a little stronger than a mule. They will out pull a mule a little bit, but you will find more mules that will pull. Like I say, they are more trustworthy. Horses get upset, and they get nervous. Around in the old days when they used to grade, pretty near all contractors had mules (Jesse Edwards).

We thought (mules) were a little tougher work animal. They could stand more heat than a horse. A mule is more apt to go and pull. There is a lot of good horses, but a lot of horses would balk. A mule wouldn't do that, and they could stand more heat than a horse (Virgil Bainbridge).

I don't know. Something different about working mules. You get a good old pair of mules, you get or fall in love with them. Same way with a good pair of horses. So many horses was bred for road horses and things like that. They wouldn't work as good as a mule. Lots of people would take them old brood mares and breed them for saddle horses and things like that. You worked with them, the old saddle horse, and he ain't going to work like that old mule would. The mule don't get tired. He gets hot, but he don't get tired. That mixed breed, when you go putting it up with that hot blood, they don't go to making good workhorses. I don't like a draft horse, too heavy on his feet. That horse ain't no good on pull. When you go to pulling a horse, the weight of a draft horse is all right; but, when you take and put him out there in the field from one day to the other, plowing corn or such as that, breaking ground, I would rather have a middle horse. I would rather have a horse weighing 800 to 900 pounds, he is the best horse. When you get up there to that 1500 to 1600 pound horse, you got more weight there to fool around with there than you need. That weight will wear him out. If you put him out there to plow ground, it wears him out. As long as you got something hard to pull, and he will pull good, you got the advantage of a big horse, but that is all. There wasn't too many of them that had draft horses. Most of them wanted a horse 900 to 1000 pounds something like that, not over 1100 if you were going to be putting him out in the field. A mule, you can take a mule weighing around 1000 to 1200 pounds, when he is in his spirit, he is a good mule wherever you put him. That was the way the mule works, but when a mule goes out, he is out, he just ain't no account. He will try, but he can't get nothing done (Roy Bailey).

The horse-mule controversy is not relevant to modern farming practices. Neither animal plays the part it once did in agricultural activities. Fewer mules inhabit the area than in the past.

Taint many (mules) left in the country. I don't expect there are 50 head of mules around Mecca and Plattsburg there now (Roy Bailey).

Like the mule, the horse has been replaced by modern machines.

I worked horses myself till '47 or '48 when (I got the) first tractor I bought. F20, F12 was the first tractor I bought, and then I went to farming with that (Roy Bailey).

Besides the animals which were necessary to power the farm machinery, farmers raised other types of livestock.

I raised all kinds of animals. I raised cattle, I raised hogs, one time I had 100 head of sheep (Willard Payton).

I raised a little corn, and I raised hogs, had four or five cows and three horses, chickens and geese and everything like that (Roy Bailey).

Specific jobs were required for the feeding, care, and eventual sale of each type of animal.

Milking was a daily task associated with cattle farming.

We raised corn mostly and pigs. We had hogs and we didn't have cattle much outside of milk cows. I could milk a cow before my husband could. We had an old brindle cow, it was red with white hair too on it. She let four of us kids milk her at one time. Everybody had a handle, she didn't care. Most cows you just had to milk them on the one side that they were used to, but that old cow didn't care (Irene Breckenridge).

Youngsters could make milking an enjoyable job by squirting milk on each other.

(Squirting) did happen; and if the cat came along, why the cat got squirted too. The cats would open their mouths and get a sip of milk once in awhile. We always had horses. I don't remember whether my dad had some mules, but . . . my husband had some mules (Irene Breckenridge).

Raising poultry necessitated certain seasonal work.

Nannie Payton's mother devised a method of caring for her chickens during the winter.

She set her hens up (in the attic) so she'd have early chickens. Then of a morning, she'd proceed to gently lift the old hens off, put them outside to eat and take care of what's necessary, carry them back up, and put them on their nests.

Geese required plucking at regular intervals.

Geese were very important. We never cared for them for food but for feathers, feather beds. A certain time, you can watch, and when your geese are losing feathers in the green grass and around, (it is) time to pick them. You drive them in like you would hogs or something in the barn and into the horse manger. You would put your sack and containers for the feathers, and then you'd get a goose, pick it. It didn't hurt much. Their feathers were loose and ready to be picked. They'd lose them if you didn't pick them. Then we'd pick them and put them in the sacks and then make our feather beds (Nannie Payton).

Although the local farmers kept enough for their own meat needs, cattle and hogs were raised primarily to be sold. Moving the animals from the farm to the train for transportation to the stock yards was an activity remembered by several of the local farmers. Some animals rode to the depot:

in a big wagon. If you would have very many, you would get the neighbors to bring wagons in. I think you would haul eight (hogs), 250 pounds (each), to a wagonload. Sometimes in the hot summertime you would lose one or two, too. I never did attempt to drive any hogs that far. I drove cattle (Eugene Arthur).

Most of the animals traveled to the freight station on foot.

I got a pony when I was five years old, Shetland pony; and when my father had hogs or cattle to sell, we would drive them five miles to Trimble to the railroad station. It was my job to go ahead to be sure that the neighbors had their gates closed, so that the stock would stay on the road. If there wasn't a gate there, why I was supposed to stay on my pony and see that they didn't enter the man's premises and keep them on the road (Frances Orr).

Many times my father helped drive pigs to market. In those days, they didn't truck them. They drove them to market. They liked to have one to lead. If they could get one to lead, then they didn't have so much trouble. If they couldn't get them to, then they had quite a little chase on their hands in getting them to go the right way. Sometimes they would string a little corn along the road to get them to go a little better (Evalyn Taylor).

The major problem in driving animals occurred when they had to cross a bridge.

Sometimes it is quite a chore to get them across the Mill Bridge. If you ever got one strung out going across, why you would make it all right (Eugene Arthur).

My father use to have what he called a lead animal. There was always one hog or one cow that he could persuade to go across. Once you ever get one across, then the rest will follow. That is particularly true of sheep. They always tell the story of sheep, if you ever get one to go anyplace, they will all go. A lots of times, he had a milk cow; and if he was selling steers or heifers, young stock, he would take the old milk cow and maybe lead her. Then all the rest of them would follow. Sometimes, it was difficult to get them to cross the bridge (Frances Orr).

Since I can remember, it was all done by trucks. I can remember my dad telling about driving hogs to Mecca. They would get up there east of Mecca, and everything was going just lovely; but they had a bridge to cross. Well those cattle and those hogs had never been on a board floor, and the instant their front feet touched that board floor, they balked on him. I guess there (has) been some more work done on the east end of that bridge trying to get hogs and cattle across that bridge than you can think of. They weren't used to that type of footing, and they just flat balked (Buster Summers).

Trimble and Mecca were the loading points for the freight trains. The farmers often had to tend their stock while waiting for the trains.

The freight trains picked up the stock along the road, and you never knew for sure (if) they weren't on schedule. They might be on time, if they hadn't had too much to pick up. It might be way in the night. I remember lots of times we would have to wait there at the station till two or three o'clock in the morning till the freight would come to load the livestock on. They had pens there, but each farmer was responsible for seeing that his livestock was loaded onto the freight train. Most of the time, you were so tired after driving them there, that frequently the station man would let you go in and lay on the benches and sleep and rest. Sometimes you walked around. Most of the time, you were so tired, you just laid down, found you a shade tree or bench inside of the station to lay down on, and you rested. Occasionally the cattle or hogs would need water, and we would have to pump buckets of water and carry and put in troughs. After they had been driven that far, they had to drink. Frequently, my father would feed them because they would lose in freight if they didn't have feed and water a certain length of time (Frances Orr).

The Kansas City stockyard was the destination of the animals. The freight train just went in certain days. Probably on Monday, there would be a freight train come down going

south. They would load out at night at Trimble and that train would go into Kansas City. Then I guess the stock would stay in the car till the next morning and be unloaded at Kansas City at the stockyard, and they would sell that day. Somebody generally went in with a load of cattle (Eugene Arthur).

Livestock was sold through the services of professionals.

In those days, you shipped your cattle to a commission firm, and at 9:00 the market opened and there would be the order buyers that bought for the slaughter houses in Kansas City. (They) would come in the yard and in those pens, and they would tell you what they would give for them. A man that worked for the commission company would either sell them, or else he would tell them they were worth more money; and somebody else would get a chance at them. Cattle in those days never fluctuated over 25 cents a hundred. Now, they may fluctuate as much as \$1 to \$1.50 a hundred. It is just a new thing; and even now, very few cattle, I think, are sold on what I would term a private basis where you ship your cattle (to a) commission firm pen and a buyer came in and said what he wanted for them. 99 percent of the cattle that go to Kansas City Stockyard, they go through an auction. They are bid on, in that fashion, and it is a lot faster thing (Buster Summers).

No direct communication between the farmer and the cattle agent was necessary for the sale of the livestock.

I don't recall any of those men that worked for the commission firm ever lived in this area, but you didn't have to contact them. All you did was, if you had cattle or hogs ready for sale, you just shipped them to that commission firm, and that would determine when you loaded them on a car. They went to Kansas City to a certain commission firm, and the same way with trucks. When we loaded cattle on trucks, why they know who to take them to. They were all unloaded at the same place. The people that handled the unloading there would see that they would get to the proper pens (Buster Summers).

While farmers who raised livestock would often attempt to raise crops for feed, it was also sometimes necessary to have corn delivered by rail.

We bought corn and had it shipped to Mecca some. We would haul corn out of boxcars, and that was quite a chore. You were supposed to unload in two to three days; and if you didn't get it done, you would have to pay the merge on it. They would ship ear corn in, and that was quite a chore scooping that ear corn out of the big box car into a wagon and haul it home, then scoop it out and go back out after

another load. We would make it before we would have to pay the merge on it, you would get help enough to do it (Eugene Arthur).

Grain bins were situated near the tracks at Trimble for those who did not want to bring their entire order to the farm at one time.

When I was a boy six or seven years old, my dad had a granary. He always fed a lot of hogs and a lot of cattle, and he had a granary at Trimble that held 1,000 bushel of corn. He would order corn, and I don't know where it came from; but he would order corn, and there would be a box car of corn come in there. That was about 500 bushel, and they would go up there, him and my brothers; and they would scoop up that corn from that granary; because if you left that corn in that box car you had to pay the merge on it. It cost, I don't know what, but who wanted to pay it. They would scoop that in that granary; and then as they needed it, they would take a team and a wagon and go up there and get about 60 bushel of grain and put it in the barn. They hauled that here as they needed it; and whenever they needed some more, they ordered another box car, and they went through the process again. I don't know what kind of terms that granary amounted to. I don't know whether my dad owned that or whether he rented it from someone, I just don't know; but there was four, five of them. That was (for) people that did a lot of feeding, and that way they always had a supply of corn (Buster Summers).

In general, the bulk of the project area farmers got their lands through inheritance.

The people that lived in this area here were like these that the great-grandad owned the land and it was passed down, passed down, passed down; and our population right here in this general area just didn't change that much (Benton Summers).

Prior to buying their own farmsteads, some residents were tenant farmers.

I had in about six, seven acres of corn on myself, but I rented ground there. I farmed about 122 acres all the time, maybe 15 acres here and 20 acres over there and such as that, and that is the way I farmed (Roy Bailey).

A prescribed period was set for farm rentals.

Now in themdays you rented a year at a time, you see. The moving time, why it was, I don't know, but it was always the first of March. You had to give possession (to) whoever lived there if they got another renter. But anyway you rented from March 1st to March 1st, and why it was thataway, I don't know (Willard Fayton).

Rarely did a landlord make a lease agreement to regain possession of farm property from a tenant by paying a price because it could work to the advantage of the tenant, so exemplified in one anecdote.

There was a funny thing happened. Now the man that I rented the farm from was awanting to sell it and we drew up a contract to rent it a second year. Well, in this contract it was written . . . that if the farm was for sale and if he sold it, I was to give him the privilege of buying possession. I already had the contract drew up, and it was in the old bank of Smithville down in town. So, I was downtown one day, and my wife called me and said, 'Jim Porter's here, and he's got a chance to sell the farm, and he wants to see you about buying possession.' He came to town with old Mr. Lyde Seldy, and we talked it over, and he said, 'What do you want for possession if we get together, and say I sell it?' I said, 'Well I want a thousand dollars.' Well, my wife had done get in touch with me on the telephone, and she said, 'Now they're coming down there, and don't you sell possession at any price.' And I said, 'Well if I get enough money, I'll sell it.' So anyway I said, 'Well, I want a thousand dollars.' Well he just laughed and laughed and he said, 'You're kidding.' And I said, 'I'm not kidding.' Well he said, 'How much of that will you take off?' Of course I knew that was out of reason then. I said, 'Well I tell you it just takes \$500 to get me to move.' Well he still laughed at me, and I said, 'Now that's the least I'm going to take.' He kinda got mad, see. Well, he said, 'The contract is over here in the bank.' Sid Williams is running the bank then. And he said, 'Let's go over to the bank and get the contract and read it.' Well, we went over to the bank, the three of us; and . . . he first told (Sid Williams) that Lyde Seldy was wanting to buy the farm, and I had promised him that I'd give him the privilege to buy possession for the coming year. And he said, 'I want you to read the contract.' Well Sid Williams got the contract out and read it--of course I knew there wasn't nothing in there--but he got it out and read it; and when he got through reading it, he looked at Jim Porter and he said, 'Jim, it don't say one word in this contract what you was to pay him, and he can ask you any amount of money they wanted to ask you and you'd have to pay it.' He said, 'There's not a word in this contract that says anything about what you was to pay. You'll have to pay out whatever he asked you.' When I think the way that turned out, they paid me the \$500, but I think what happened, the seller and the buyer split that \$500. But now \$500 themdays was a lot of money (Willard Payton).

Obtaining money to buy farm equipment or stock often depended on loans from family or friends. Government sponsored farm loans were not easy to acquire.

That is the way I got started. I went down here to the fellow that run the garage--his name was Tennon, Hugh Tennon--and I went down there and bought the team. That was when that USA was loaning money to farmers to buy stuff to start the farm with and such as that, I went down there and bought the horses and ten head of sheep and three sows. They told me and him to come down there; and they would let me have money. So (they) went down there, they found all kinds of flaws, the place wasn't fenced, the place wasn't this, wasn't a house, and everything. It wound up they wouldn't let me have the money at all. Made Tennon mad. Tennon says, 'You come up after you get a fence built. You come up, and I'll take a mortgage on your farm.' So he took the mortgage on the farm, and I come up and got the sows, sheep, and everything, set most of them out on the fenced part. On the others, I would set there and watch to keep them from getting on anybody else till I got the fence built. That is the way I got started. When I left town here, I had one old sow and eight pigs. I bought eight acres from my aunt, and she waited on me till I made the money to pay for it. The rest of the land my uncle deeded to me if I would take care of him and see that he was buried when he died. That is the way I got the other. So I went down there and worked and fixed all that up and helped start it. I come up here to Tennon's and started working in the garage and worked up here in the day time and farmed down here at night. (I) farmed at night down home till I got him paid. That is the way I paid him, I worked up here in the garage, paid him for the sheep, hogs and things, and the horses, got the mortgage off the place. That is the way I had to work to get where I got (Roy Bailey).

Current mechanical devices have changed the farm scene. Both the machinery and the philosophy of modern agriculture seem strange to the older generation of farmers.

I would be lost now with this kind of farming like they do now. I wouldn't even know how to start in. Every once in awhile a friend of mine and I go to Jamesport, Missouri. There are quite a few Amish, and they don't believe in modern machinery. It brings back a lot of memories to me to go up there and see those people, you know, that are still farming with horses. They still mow hay, plant corn, plow corn. You take a young farmer in this country, if he has a pretty good year, I just know, he will go buy a little bit bigger tractor; and of course he will have to have all new stuff to go with it. The machine companies are helping them. You take one of those old Amish fellows, he will have eight to twelve children, and he will keep four or six horses, but he will buy another 40 acres of land. By the time that old man is old enough to die, like myself, why he can stand in the middle and any direction he looks in is his land. It is worth anybody's

while to get interested in stuff like that to go up there in the summertime or in the spring of the year when they are really operating. It is amusing to a lot of these people. It brings back a lot of memories to me. When I was a kid growing up, that was the way we farmed (Jesse Edwards).

Farming operations have changed. Used to (be) everything was done with horses and mules. Now it is all done with machinery. You used to get out and mow the weeds, and now they spray them. They have to go back to mowing them because the government is outlawing a lot of weed spray. Used to (be) that if you had a drainage problem or something like that, why you took a spade or a shovel and did something like that. Now, people, if they can't ride a machine, they don't want to do anything. Nobody does anything with their hands anymore. In the wintertime they burned wood, and it was sawed by hand and lifted up; and now, they have these power saws and saw more in an hour than you could saw in a week the other way. Everything has become mechanical (Frances Orr).

Water from Smithville Lake will cover some of the ground which was once farmed. The remaining land has gone to the hands of a new breed of farmers as the oldtimers have turned their jobs over to the young.

TOBACCO FARMING

At one time tobacco was a popular crop for Missouri farmers. As many of the early settlers brought with them a southern heritage, some sought to produce the same crops they had in their previous homes.

My grandfather, he started out raising tobacco. They come out of Kentucky, (and) that was what his job was. He would always have an acre, acre and a half (Jesse Edwards).

We didn't know anything about raising it. I didn't. But we had a fellow that used to be a tobacco man, he come from Kentucky and he lived here in this house and raised tobacco on the shares (Virgil Bainbridge).

Residents in the project area grew tobacco for profit as well as for their own use.

My dad was a tobacco chewer, and he was a very practical person because of necessity, too. He grew his own tobacco in a small patch, and then he would have his own chewing tobacco (Nannie Payton).

The process of raising tobacco involved several steps as well as a good deal of hard labor. The initial phase required preparation of the tobacco bed.

My grandfather, he was an oldtimer. Along about February, he would pile up a lot of brush and burn this brush and mix those ashes all up with the dirt so the ground wouldn't be froze. When that cooled down--so it wouldn't burn the seed--he would put the tobacco seed in. Then they would throw something over it to protect it. They would throw some brush over it to keep animals from digging in it and stuff like that. Just as soon as the plants would come up, then they would take everything off it, and he would pull the weeds out with his hands (Jesse Edwards).

Well, you put the seeds into a tobacco bed. It's just sown. Well, of course, the process for that, you have to kill all the weed seeds. To do that you bring in a lot of timber and burn a fire. After you burnt all the old lumber and everything you (could) find on it, the heat would kill the weed seeds. Then you'd get a nice mulch bed and sow your tobacco seeds in this tobacco bed right after you burnt it, real early in the spring. It doesn't seem to bother it much, best I can remember. You plant that, and

then you'd cover that bed with muslin. You'd drive down early in the spring, and you would see row after row of farms with their tobacco beds (Charlie Taylor).

Themdays we had to get brush and burn the beds, burn this brush on where we were going to make the seeds for the plants. We burned that, and then the bed was nine feet wide and ten feet long, this bed. A teaspoon of seed would sow that. Of course, then the weeds would come up in them plants. When the plants come up, they just come up a little, and we had to keep the weeds out of the plants until they got big enough to set (Virgil Bainbridge).

Once the seedlings were established, they were transplanted to the field. Early tobacco farmers performed this step by hand.

Around the first of June was when they set. The first years we set it by hand. Pour water in there just like setting tomato plants, cabbage plants, or any other kind of plants. In later years, they got what was called a tobacco setter (Jesse Edwards).

Use of machinery made the setting procedure easier.

After the plants get up eight to ten inches tall, you pull the big plants and go transplant them in your rows in the fields (using) the tobacco setter. It was a watering mechanism with a drum of water on it, a real low seat on each side in the back. As they came through, they'd lay a plant down in there and would cover it up (and) water it all at the same time (Charlie Taylor).

Around the first of June we'd set them out. They were about two or three inches tall. Maybe a little bigger than that. You have to let them get about that big so they'd set good. Then you got a setter. You pull it with horses. It's on wheels, and it's got a water tank on it, and there's two fellows sitting right down low to the ground. You put your plants in your lap, and it's got a shoe that runs along there, and then it's got a timer. Every 18 inches it spurts the water. You have to have the plant there, and when it spurts the water, you stick the plant in. Them metal shoes fits so that it clamps dirt around it. You have to go real slow with it in order to set them. Well at that time, it was about 11,000 plants to the acre, something like that (Virgil Bainbridge).

The young plants required a good deal of care once they had been relocated.

We would set it by hand, and we would hoe it till the leaves spread out pretty well. Then they would plow it with a good slow mule that wouldn't tear the blades off the tobacco, but you had to keep weeds out of it. Then every week we would go look for worms and pull them worms off, step on them, and kill them. There wasn't no spray (Jesse Edwards).

You had to go through and pull the weeds out of it because you couldn't get close to a tobacco plant with any kind of a plow (because you could) break the roots, break the leaves off. The highest grade tobacco grows on the low leaf on a tobacco plant. Now the ones that grow up on the top, high on the plant, are lower grades. So you would guard the quality of those leaves when you don't want to damage the low ones on the plant. You had to go through the field with hoes in order to get the weeds out of the rows (Charlie Taylor).

In the early days, lack of pesticides forced individual care to be given to each plant.

My brother and I would pick the worms. You know you had to pick tobacco worms (Nannie Payton).

Chemicals were used in later years.

Of course, we would then have to take care of the beds, then set it, and then plow it, keep the weeds out of the field. Then you would have to spray it to keep the worms from ruining your crop. Then when it got up about in August, if you got it out a little early it could be the latter part of August, the first of September, then you have to break the suckers out of it. It grows up in big leaves; and . . . then when it gets so old, (there) will be what they call suckers, shoot out right (off) them plants. You have to break them off. They're no good. They ruin the tobacco. You got to break them out with your fingers. Now they tell me now they've got a chemical that they can spray on these beds and keep the weeds down, and they also got a chemical that they can spray and kill them suckers. I haven't raised any lately, but they tell me they got a chemical that will do it (Virgil Bainbridge).

Keeping the tobacco plants alive required so much work that a tobacco grower was wise to have several children.

Usually a man with a big family would do it on shares with the landowner. He'd move into a tenant house or on this farm, and he usually had a lot of kids, cause that took a lot of kids to harvest that tobacco and hoe it. In those days they used Paris Green to keep the tobacco worms off. So that took a lot of labor (Charlie Taylor).

Harvesting the tobacco crop was a complicated procedure. The plants were cut and dried in the field prior to being stored in the barn.

My dad would cut the tobacco when it was time to cut it with a corn knife or something. Then you put it on what you call tobacco sticks. You put several of those leaves on it and it would sit there in the field and cure. Then he would take the wagon--and I'd be in it--and he would

take those, and they were lengths that would just reach across the wagon bed from side to side. You could put them on there and push them back and push them back until you get all you could in there. He didn't have a tobacco barn, it was a small crop. He put 2 x 4's and different things so he could hang those tobacco sticks up with the tobacco on it to further cure (Nannie Payton).

Along in September, when it begin to get at its heaviest stage that is when they would cut it, leave the end, and put it over a stick. If the tobacco was really heavy, six was about all you could put on a stick. If they was lighter tobacco, they would put eight on a stick (Jesse Edwards).

After the plant grows up and it is time to harvest it, about the first of September every year, well they use a spike on a tobacco pick. They have a knife that cuts the plant off at ground level, and they shove it across this spike onto this stick. When you get about eight or ten plants on one stick, after it wilts down, it is hauled to the tobacco barn and hung across the rails in the tobacco barn to cure (Charlie Taylor).

Well, we had to get equipment to do it. You've got to have tobacco sticks. They're 4 foot, 4 inches long. They're about an inch square. They're sharp on each end. You put seven stalks in this stick. You've got to cut it. They have knives, special made knives, and then a spear that goes on. You stick that 4 foot stick in the ground at one end, and then you put a metal spear on the other end, and then you cut that stalk off and put him down on that stick. They put seven stalks to the stick, and then you got to haul them in and put them in the barn. You got to rack them. You have to have a rail they call it, a rail in the barn. Well the rail is just wide enough that you can lay them sticks on and let the tobacco hang down, and they're about (a foot) apart (Virgil Bainbridge).

Suspending the tobacco sticks in the barn was a delicate maneuver.

The wagon man would haul it up on the wagon, would haul it up to you first, and you would hand it up for two rails. (The rails) were 2 x 4's and 2 x 6's. (Racks weighed) about 60 to 70 pounds. It was about like handling a bail of hay. You had to hand it up, and he could straighten it out after he got it up there. If you would slip that clear up there, you would had no way of keeping it on there. They split that stalk up half way and then put it down on there and got about that much to hold. That would go down to one end when you would put it on there. You would hand the stick up, and he would put it up there. Then he would take ahold of the other end, and then he would spread what they called barn burn, spread the stalk (Jesse Edwards).

The curing was continued in the barn. Atmospheric conditions had to be maintained at a suitable level to cause the tobacco to become "encased." At this point it was ready for the final processing.

After it's cured, it is taken down and put in piles and you work on that during the winter. Of course, it has to come encased in damp weather before you take it down out of the barn, so it's powdered dried. It takes a real moist day, a lot of humidity in the air, to get it what they called 'encased,' so it doesn't rattle and break off the leaves again before you can handle it. Oh, very complicated. Of course, all the tobacco barns have slats that you can open up to let the air in the barn, blow through the barn, especially . . . when it first goes in there to cure it down. And especially again when you're wanting to get it encased so you (can) take it down so you can start stripping it (Charlie Taylor).

In the fall when you got ready to take it down, you would wait to catch that tobacco that was encased. If you didn't, you would waste it all. (It) would have to come encased; in other words, you could take it and twist it any way. Some of them oldtimers could go out and tell that the tobacco was encased. 'How do you know it if you ain't been down there to look?' 'Well, I know it is.' They take it down, and pile it in a bulk and keep it wet; (then) it would stay encased till you run out. You would just take a few sticks at a time. You kept it covered up real well, and, that way, it would stay encased. By the time you run that out, if there wasn't any more to put down, well you would have to wait and come back and put it encased again, dampen it good and cover it up good with a heavy cloth (Jesse Edwards).

You put them in the barn about a foot apart, and you fill up your barn that way. You got to be pretty careful not to get too thick in the barn; for if it comes a real warm spell or rainy weather, you got to give that tobacco ventilation. If you don't it will house burn, what they call house burn. It will get hot in there and ruin your tobacco, (so) you got to give it ventilation. Then after it gets so far dried out, then it's stretched down; and you don't have no trouble. Then it gets real dry; and then, in the fall of the year about November, latter part of October, why if a real damp spell comes along and brings moisture in the air, why then that tobacco will come encased. It gets so dry you can't handle it. If you do it will just break up and you'll lose it (Virgil Bainbridge).

Once the tobacco had become encased, it was suitably malleable to withstand stripping

you wait for it to come encased so it won't be crumbly, and then you pull the leaves off (Nannie Payton).

You had to watch it and catch it and take it out so many stalks and strip it. You could take it into a warm room and strip it right off till you could get off all you could reach around. Then you would take one of them good leaves and wrap around it. You could tie a rope. Then you would pack that down. You just let it dry. After the case went out you couldn't strip tobacco anymore; because if you did, you would ruin it. It would just crumble up (Jesse Edwards).

When it gets damp and soft, you can handle it. Then you take it and pile it down on the pile. (You) lay it in a pile, and then you strip it, . . . take the leaves off. Those little sheds on a tobacco farm, that's what you call a stripping shed. They got a table in there (Virgil Bainbridge).

Several people worked together to strip the tobacco.

They'd take them off the rails, lay them on the ground, and then they'd carry in an armload of those and lay them on the stripping table. A stalk of tobacco would go down station to station right on down to the end of the stripping room. Then they'd throw out the stalks, out the door; or burn them in the stove to keep warm. That's the world's first assembly line, the stripper in the tobacco barn (Charlie Taylor).

The quality of the tobacco was determined by the placement of the leaves on the plant.

There was six grades at that time. Now there are only maybe two. There was 'flying,' that little bitty fine stuff at the end of the stalk; it is very weak. Then (it) had the 'trash,' and all them bottoms went into cigarette tobacco because it was very weak. Next was the 'lugs,' and then they was the 'bright.' Those two was the heaviest of the tobacco. They most usually went into cigars or pipe tobacco, the fancy tobacco. Then they had the 'long reds,' they was next to the brights. Then they had the 'short reds.' Those at that time always went into chewing tobacco. Now they grind it up into Beechnut and all that kind of stuff. At that time nearly all of it was in Tinsley's or another brand of Horseshoe; and they had a brand of Days Work; and they had a brand of Peachy Plug. Them was chewing tobaccos (Jesse Edwards).

Each station in the stripping line was responsible for a different grade.

You start down the stripping room with a stalk of tobacco, and it's pulled off of there in grades. The low leaves

are jerked off first and called 'flying', and I can't remember all the different grades. There's 'flying', 'red', 'trash'. They're all different grades of the tobacco that comes off the stalk. The low ones are the highest grade and highest priced. Everybody pulls his own grade as that stalk goes down the table. They work one stalk and shove it over in a pile for the next man (Charlie Taylor).

Each fellow, well it takes about seven grades of tobacco, and each fellow pulls off his grade and hands it over to the next fellow; and he pulls. Then when they get enough of each grade, why they take a . . . leaf and wrap around it, that holds that together. A roll of leaves, they call it a 'hand'. It's about whatever you can wrap around your hand. And you take a leaf and wrap around it, right around the endings, let the stem part of the leaf hold it up there, and get about what you can hold and take another leaf and wrap around it. That holds it together (Virgil Bainbridge).

Once the tobacco was stripped it was ready for personal consumption.

You'd dry it, and then you'd cure it and strip it in the winter when it's encased. Then he would twist the twists. We would twist that until it looked almost as perfect as a boughten twist of tobacco and press it with a big iron press he got somewhere. For smoking, he had a small wooden box he kept by his chair. That's where he crumbled the others that was not made into twists. He crumbled those and filled his pipe from that, and that was his smoking tobacco. It was twists for chewing. Oh, sometimes he didn't have enough for twists, and he's pick up that dry smoking tobacco and chew it (Nannie Payton).

Tobacco which was to be marketed was also pressed.

You put it in a press. You get a bunch of them leaves and lay it like that and press, press them down together. Then you're ready to go to market with them, haul them to market. (You are) ready for the money then. It takes about 11 months (Virgil Bainbridge).

Farmers who sold their tobacco commercially prepared the stripped product and took it to market.

Oh, generally the market just opened about December the first, so it doesn't have to hang too long until it cures out. (It was sold) by the pound to the Weston Market (as a) hog's head of tobacco. That's a term (for a) round stack of tobacco head (Charlie Taylor).

The market operated from

December usually to January and February till it all gets sold out. You would place it in wagons. Nowdays they put it on trucks (Jesse Edwards).

Bidding and selling at the market place occurred at a rapid pace.

I (couldn't) understand a word the auctioneer said. They was too fast for me. Them buyers go along there, pretty soon he will be amumbling something, and he will say, 'Sold to R. J. Reynolds', or next time will be an American, and they just keep awalking. It was all marked whose it was. Just like you take anything to a sale now you know, your name is on it. The auctioneer would walk along, and whoever the barn man was, would go along with him. And, like my grandad, if you took tobacco up there, it would all be put into one basket. It is sold by the baskets (Jesse Edwards).

Some farmers frequented other markets than that at Weston.

I started raising it in '31, I believe it was. We got an average of 18 cents a pound for it. That was average. We took the bigger part to Kentucky, hauled it to Kentucky. We thought we would do better by going to Kentucky with it, went to Shelbyville, Kentucky (Virgil Bainbridge).

Over the years tobacco growing declined in popularity in the project area. Those who continued production found a good market locally.

All the oldtimers--locals--around there, they knew he raised the tobacco, so they would buy their chew and smoke tobacco from him. He got so he didn't take too much to the market because he didn't have any left. They would buy nearly all his tobacco, the ones that didn't raise it. In the last few years, my grandad--he got real old--why he wouldn't fool with that tobacco, but he would always raise enough for his own customers around there. Then he never went to the tobacco market anymore, he just sold it to them (Jesse Edwards).

The vast amount of work involved in tobacco production finally destroyed interest in this type of enterprise.

That's what killed the tobacco industry was the labor involved (Charlie Taylor).

SORGHUM PRODUCTION

The production of sorghum or "long sweetening" as it was more popularly called, began in Missouri in the mid-nineteenth century when the United States Patent Office distributed packets of seeds to interested farmers. It became commercially profitable in the 1860's when the Civil War interrupted the northward flow of southern sugar; however, the end of hostilities caused sorghum production to become a local crop for personal consumption. Efforts to produce true sugar from sorghum and thus transform it into a commercially viable crop were consistently unsuccessful.

See William Clark Breckinridge, "Early History of the Sorghum Industry," in J. M. Breckinridge, Wm. Clark Breckinridge; His Life, Lineage, and Writings. St. Louis: published by the author, 1932, pp. 246-248.

Within the project zone, sorghum was raised and processed by the May family. Ora May recalled helping his father in the business.

He farmed down there, and he made sorghum. I think I was 11 years old when he started making sorghum. I mostly worked in the field. There is one older boy than I am; and, at that time, he would always put us out in the field to keep the bunch going, help get the thing in and out.

The field workers used implements to harvest the crop.

(We) cut it by hand, stripped it by hand. We would have a wood paddle that we would strip it with. A big wood paddle would be sharp on both ends; like a corn knife, it was about that long. You would cut it down this away, strip it, see. Strip it going down and coming up both. When you would go down on this side, a bunch of stalk would be thick, you see; it would grow about that thick in a row. You would strip it from here down and put your stick on the other side and get one coming up. You could strip several stalks with one lick. After you got use to it, it didn't bother you more than anything else. Then you would cut it, top it, haul it in.

Several helpers were needed to run the operation.

He would have 10 to 12 guys lots of times. You would have to strip it, then you would have to cut. Then you

would have to haul it in to the mill. Then you would have to grind it. Then it would take one or two to get it into the vat. Then one would be over there to cook it all. They stayed around the cooking thing all the time. A lot of times they would be just one, he wouldn't need two all the time, one man could take care of two vats. One man could stand between them and take care of two.

The second and third stages in the process involved grinding and cooking the resulting liquid for an appropriate amount of time.

He would have him a cane mill and a pair of horses on it, and it would go around and around. Somebody would be underneath it feeding that cane in there. The two big grinding things would be setting up, you know; and you would feed that cane in there; and juice would run out on the other side and run into a barrel. When it would get to the barrel, you would strain that juice off and strain it down into a vat. Then they would cook it.

(The vat) would be about 10 or 12 gallon. He would usually put in 100 gallons (of) juice. I know he used a 50-gallon barrel, and it would take about two of them to make about 8 or 10 gallon of sorghum. They would cook it about three hours. When it got pretty well done, it would burn easy; it would scorch easy, and you would have to keep stirring it till it got to where you wanted it, cool it. It would get to popping kind of like. Syrup, that bubble pops up and get about like a quarter. You like it to get down to about like a dime or smaller than that. It was done then, you would want to know about the thickness. You would like it to get a little more than a dime, (then) she was about ready.

Packaging the syrup after it was cooled completed the process after which the sorghum was ready to market.

He would put it in a can, and he would weigh it. It takes 11 pounds for a gallon, and most of the people would bring their own containers. They would usually tell you how much they would want, 4 gallons, 5, 10, or whatever. He would just weigh the container and just run the sorghum in it. It was sitting on scales. You set this can on the scales. Of course, he weighed the can and start pouring sorghum in it till he got to the notch. He sold it for 75 cents a gallon. I think he may have started out at 60 to 65 cents a gallon, then he got up as high as \$2.50. It is higher than that now.

The cost of overhead and employee problems finally caused the cessation of the May sorghum business.

It would bring a pretty good price, wages at them times;
but it finally worked down. Help was so hard to get,
it would eat up your profit.

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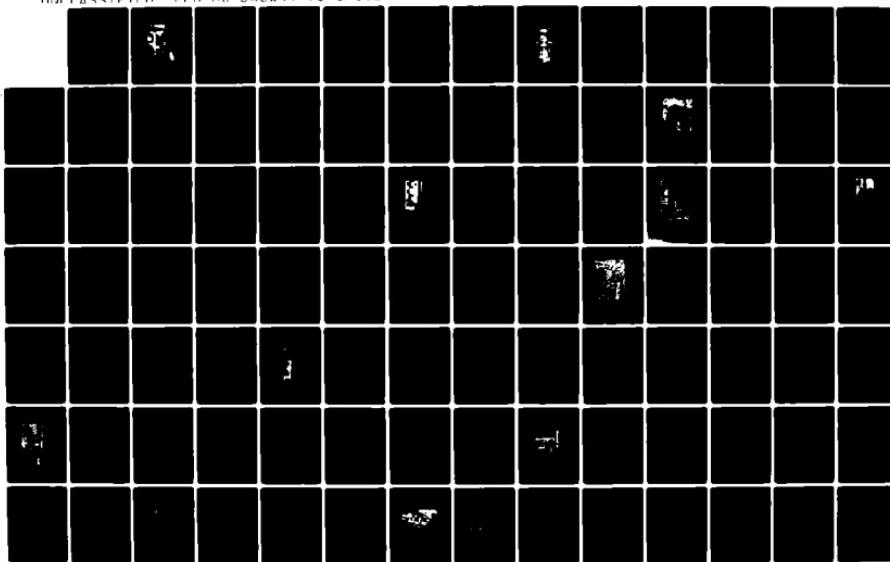
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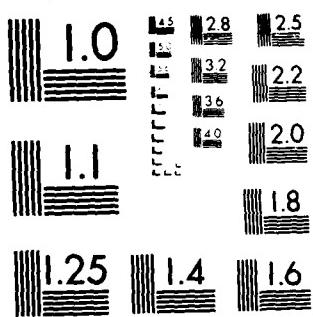
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Figure 5.
Sorghum production. Courtesy of the State Historical
Society of Missouri.

FOOD PREPARATION

The preparation and preservation of meat and other foods was a major concern of the farming community. As explained by Benton Summers:

Farmers, the people that was doing this hard work, they wanted a lot of meat to eat. They ate a lot of it.

Community effort was involved in periodic chores such as butchering.

When it come to butchering or anything like that, everybody would share--help with the butchering. That way we'd have our meat for the year. We didn't buy meat, we didn't buy any meat at all. We butchered all our meat. We had enough meat to run us until next year (Virgil Bainbridge).

Lack of refrigeration had an important effect on the choice of meat included in the diet.

I was a pretty good size boy before I knew what beef was because we had no way of keeping it. They would come to the butcher shop and buy steak and buy ice, block ice, take home and keep, and have steak once in awhile, once a month maybe on Sunday morning; or my mother would buy beef roast maybe once or twice a month. We was practically raised on pork and chicken (Jesse Edwards).

One effort to circumvent the problem of preserving beef was initiated in the project area.

They had what they called a Paradise Beef Club. You had no way of getting much beef or preserving it or keeping it like we do now. (So) they'd join these beef clubs (Nannie Payton).

We belonged to a calf club, as I remember it, and different ones would kill a calf for beef, you know; and everybody would get their share. We didn't have meat markets and things in those days. They did years after that (Irene Breckenridge).

In the summertime people got hungry for something fresh besides fried chicken, so we had what we called the beef club (Frances Orr).

The Paradise Club met on Saturdays.

In the summertime we had a beef club. There must have been a dozen or so in that beef club. A beef was killed each Saturday, about three Saturdays in a row, and they did that throughout the summer (Benton Summers).

Other towns had similar groups.

They had two beef clubs in Smithville (in) different neighborhoods (Virgil Bainbridge).

Responsibility for the beef and the division of meat operated on an alternating basis.

The farmers in the area would take turns on Saturday morning butchering a beef, and they would take it to the school house lawn, and there it would be divided. You rotated. One Saturday you would get the neck area, and the next Saturday you would get the forequarter and on down. Then the steak would be on the hindquarter; and you rotated; so, you always had some part of the beef at a different week (Frances Orr).

One day a week the members would all go down there, and they'd cut this beef up in what they thought was equal parts for each one, and you took your part. One time you would get the nice steak part, part of the hind-quarter one time (or) maybe the front quarter. Sometimes it was the neck. My dad said he thought he got the neck half the time. Those were tough. We didn't know how to cook brisket in those days. Brisket is wonderful if you know how to cook it. That's the way they got their beef. Then they took it home and kept it in the cellar or hung it in the well where your bucket was hung to keep it cold (Nannie Payton).

They was a bunch of men--or a bunch of people--they'd organize a beef club. Whatever amount of men that they organized, why they'd have one fellow to do the butchering; and every fellow, when it come his turn to come around, he furnished the beef. Say, so-and-so would furnish the meat one (week). I can remember when we furnished the beef approximately three times (Virgil Bainbridge).

There was a standard procedure for each Saturday meeting of the Paradise Beef Club.

Every time they rotated, and each member of the club would kill a beef through the summer. They would have it up here to the school grounds, that is where they cut it up and divided. At two to three o'clock in the afternoon, the beef would be up there; and all members

would be there. They would get their portion of that beef; and, when they got home, they would do whatever they wanted to with it. That included all the community around Paradise. They killed it at home and would take it to the school grounds in a wagon. They were always in halves when they got them there, and they would cut them up. There were hooks on the support that they had at that time. Whatever the first beef was they cut off, if that was neck, that went on a certain hook. The next piece would go on the next hook, the next piece would go on the next hook, and so on till they got the beef cut up. Each member took a certain hook, they rotated, and they would take this. Through the summer you had every part of the beef. You got some good beef and some steak and some roast, you got some of that every time a beef came out. Then you rotated these hooks, as I remember it, and so you got different parts of the beef from Saturday to Saturday (Benton Summers).

Changing positions of the hooks on which the beef was hung ensured that the best meat was portioned out in an equitable manner throughout the season.

They'd come and butcher the beef and haul it to town; and they had a place right there, right across from the Christian Church. Down there below the old mill there, Patterson Mill, there was kind of a vacant lot there. They'd take the beef in there and quarter it out and hang it up on a rack, and every fellow would take a different portion every time. They'd hang it up, and they had a hole up there and (that) had hooks in it. They'd put like the steak, they'd cut the steak, and they put it on. They'd shift it, each fellow would get a certain portion. When it was your come around, they'd hang your amount on them hooks. Then when they got it all cut up and hung up there, why then they'd call your name and what portion you should get. Then you had a sack there, we always took a flour sack; they'd put your beef in the sack . . . And we'd take it home. The only way we had of keeping it was an ice box. We'd buy 100 pounds of ice, sometimes twice a week; and our refrigerator would hold 100 pounds of ice. We'd put that ice in there, and that kept the beef during the summer (Virgil Bainbridge).

Prior to the introduction of refrigerators and ice boxes, even with weekly butchering, preservation of beef and other perishable food posed problems in the summer.

You had to have a deep well. We had what we called a big beef bucket. It wasn't too large around, maybe 10 inches around. It was rather deep, I would say,

maybe 20 inches deep and with a big rope. We would hang that down in these wells. If you were lucky, it would stay and wouldn't spoil before you got it ate up by Thursday or Friday (Benton Summers).

Cooler weather allowed for other methods of natural refrigeration.

The beef would be hung up on the back porch or an outside building, and in the wintertime it would freeze. Then it would keep fresh for several months (Frances Orr).

Having a well was necessary to keep other food items.

They use to keep milk down in the wells. Every once in awhile a bucket would turn over, and we would have milky water. It would be (a) a granite bucket with a lid. Sometimes somebody would have an accident pulling it up. We had no ice in those days (Irene Breckenridge).

Meat and fish was frequently put in buckets that had a tight lid and would be lowered by a rope into a deep well. The meat was heavy, it would sink down into the water at the level that they wanted it to stay there; but milk a lot of times would tip in the container. It wouldn't be heavy enough to sink down through the water (Frances Orr).

Later we had a good cellar and had a good place to put our milk and butter and things; but for a time, we would hang it in the well in the summertime to keep it cool (Evalyn Taylor).

Another means of preservation was the storm cellar.

Most of the time milk, butter, and cheese was kept in cellars, either under the house or out on the lawn. Those same cellars were used for refuge during a severe storm (Frances Orr).

People in themdays had a cellar, there wasn't very many basements. Basements wasn't very good for keeping stuff. You take those old large cellars in the ground, they really kept that stuff. I know in the fall we would pick the apples and put down in that cellar and dig the potatoes and put in the cellar. Mother always had 300 to 400 jars of fruit and vegetables. She canned vegetables and put them in that cellar, and you had them year around (Jesse Edwards).

I remember we had a cave that we kept things in. They built that after I was old enough to remember. It really did keep things (Irene Breckenridge).

Nannie Payton remembered watching her father constuct a storm cellar.

We had an old (cellar) first. It was bought with the farm. It was dug and just had a door that just lifted up. Then later my father dynamited rocks out of the rough ground on the farm, back where a branch was in back of the farm, and then hauled the rock up and had this big cellar dug. Then for the ceiling he bought brick, cause he run out of rock; and then it had a small house on it which you call a cellar house. It was painted white and (had) shelves up high where you could keep your clean fruit jars before you filled.

The advent of ice boxes provided a new winter occupation supplying coolant.

In the earlier times, there were no refrigerators; and very few people had ice boxes; but I can remember maybe two to three years later when I got a little older, we got an ice box. Walter Rupe put up ice off Uncle Harry Benton's pond, and we would go up and get a chunk of ice and bring it out and put it in the ice box (Benton Summers).

My father's sister and her husband had their own ice house. They cut ice off their pond and packed it in sawdust in a building, but my folks didn't do that. It was a lot of work. I guess my folks thought it was too hard and hardly worth the effort. It probably depended, too, on the size family you had (Frances Orr).

Those who wanted to avoid the work of obtaining and storing their own ice could purchase it from a commercial ice house.

In the wintertime, a man by the name of Rainey would saw chunks of ice out and pack it in sawdust. (The warehouse) was right by the creek there (by) the bridge in the main part of town on, I guess it is, Bridge Street there in town (Frances Orr).

We used to have an old fellow by the name of Jim Rainey. He's still got some younger ones scattered around. He had a large ice house here. Of course, there was no freezer in themdays, you know. Of course, we had refrigerators. And he would put up that ice in 300 pound cakes. It was cut so thick it would go in most refrigerators (Willard Payton).

Willard Payton described the labor involved in gathering ice for the ice house.

Themdays the river was deep, and they used a horse to mark the ice with. Then they had men with ice saws to saw out those blocks. They had another horse (and) had a long shoe that runs from the river up in the

Figure 6.
Cutting Ice on the Little Platte. Courtesy of the
Smithville Historical Society.



ice house. Well they had some kind of thing that they put behind the ice. It had handles on it kind of like a . . . dolly. It works on the idea of a dolly. They put it under it and behind it and take a whole row up at one time. Well when you got one of those layed so far, why they would use saw dust between each layer of ice to keep them from freezing together. That was in either 1919 or '20. That was in the wintertime when I couldn't do nothing else, you see. A fellow by the name of Lee Warrn, he's been gone a long time, several years now, we set together, the two of us. I know old Mr. Rainey said we was the two best ice setters he had. It was wintertime, and I couldn't do nothing but my chores, don't you see. So I'd get up and do my chores by lantern light and then get on a horse and ride horseback from out there three miles to down here.

Curing made refrigeration unnecessary for pork; and, therefore, since it was the easiest meat to preserve, pork was the most popular. As with many of the other laborious jobs, farmers banded together for hog butchering.

Neighbors would help each other when it come to that. They would have big vats of some kind that they would put the hogs in to and scrape the hairs off and all that (Irene Breckenridge).

Yep. We had to do all of ours, . . . and then, well maybe the next day, you'd go to one of the other neighbors and help him do all of his butchering (Willard Payton).

All the neighbors would get together and have a butchering day. They'd get the slaughtering taken care of and the scalding tank fired up. They'd have to scald the hogs and roll them out on a table that was built for it. They'd scrape all the hair off of the hog after he'd been scalded, gut him, and cut him up (Charlie Taylor).

We had the equipment on the farm. Well, we had partnerships in some of the equipment. Every fellow would get it and use it when it was butchering time (Virgil Bainbridge).

Like many of the other farming activities, hog butchering was an annual chore.

We would kill around the month of Thanksgiving, and we would kill again right after Christmas (Roy Bailey).

(We butchered) after the weather got cool. After Thanksgiving, usually, through the month of December was when most of it was done (Jesse Edwards).

I've butchered in zero weather. That was the only time you could do it (Willard Payton).

Each family provided its own hogs and butchered what they would need for the year.

(They butchered) just what they would use theirselves. They would butcher mabye four or five hogs a year, and sometimes they would go in together and buy a calf and kill it and have calf and divide it up and such as that. Where I used to work at, we would kill as high as 15 head of hogs every winter. That was for the bunch of them, me and the farmers that was around there. We would all go in there. I killed two, old man Harris would kill five or six for himself, and his boys killed two apiece. He had three boys. We would kill that and make two killings out of that every winter. Kill eight or ten and then next to the last one we would kill six or seven. We would be about three days taking the meat off and taking care of them, sausage ground and everything like that (Roy Bailey).

Well there was four children and we'd butcher nine hogs. (Virgil Bainbridge).

With a large family, he would butcher eight to ten hogs. Now my father, there was five of us in the family (and) my grandfather lived with us, making it six and we use to kill seven hogs (Jesse Edwards).

Numerous people were needed to complete all the tasks involved in the butchering process.

They killed the hogs and dipped them in tanks of hot water and scraped the hair off. Then the meat was cooled and laid out on big planks. The men would sharpen their knives and cut the meat up into hams and shoulders and bacon (which) were put into what we called the smoke house; and they would build a fire with hickory wood and smoke the meat (Frances Orr).

They had what they called a scalding box. They had a pole that they would hang these hogs on, and they would scald them, rolled them out on this platform, and scraped them. Then they would carry them down, hang them by the hocks like they do in the packing house, and hang them on this pole. They would take their internals out, and run all over, and take what was good; and the rest they throwed away. Then they would take and cut those hogs up and let the meat cool out, and then they would cure it with salt. They would put it in these big boxes. Then they would take that meat up after so long and brush the salt off it. Then they would smoke it with hickory smoke, and it was good eating. Some of the men would

be cutting up the lard. Some of them would be taking that sausage and grinding it with a hand grinder, and they would help one another. You could take a lard press, put that meat in there and put them sausage sacks on there and press them and put them in those big cloth sacks and hang them up. They would keep in the winter-time (Jesse Edwards).

The initial work included the slaughter, hanging, and scalding of the hogs.

(We would) shoot them, then stick him--then stick him with a knife. We would actually dye him. We had a long vat full of hot water and rolled him over in that and turn him over and over till you could put your hand in there, and the water would start coming loose. Then you would roll him back out on some boards and start scraping him, scrape all that hair off (Ray Bailey).

It would take us all day. We'd get up about three o'clock in the morning, start the fire, and get the water hot. Then when it got light enough to kill the hogs, we killed them. We always made the remark, we had a hog on the pole, hanging on the pole, when the sun was up. (We) shot them. Some of them, at first there, some of them did knock them in the head with an ax. But a rifle is much better. I've killed a many of a hog, I don't know how many I've killed. I've shot a lot of them. Then, of course, stick them, scald them, hang them on a pole (Virgil Bainbridge).

Scalding was an important step in the procedure. Improper care during scalding would create difficulty in removing the hair.

If you get your water too hot, it will set that hair, and you can hardly get it off. If you get your water just right, you got to watch when you're scalding him and . . . see him when the hair goes to slipping. When the hair slips good, take him out. Get him out. If you don't, you'll burn him. Why you can hardly get the hair off. If you get it too hot, it will set the hair where you can hardly get the hair off. If you do it right, that hair will come off easy. If you get him scalded right, you'd get him cleaned off so pretty and nice. But if you didn't scald right, why you'd have a hard time getting that hair off. If you got him too hot, it seemed like it kind of cooked the hide (Virgil Bainbridge).

Once the scraping stage was completed, the carcass was hung, the viscera were removed, and the rest of the necessary cutting was performed.

We had a special pole that we put up to hang them on that one pole. It would be (a) pretty heavy one. There is leaders . . . right above the foot, . . . and you cut into them leaders with a knife. (You) put a stick into them, a stick about that long, about two foot, and stick them through these muscles. You had to hang them that way, so we could get the entrails out. Then, of course, you took the fat--the lard--get that off. Of course, when you trim the bacon, why then you have a lot of fat there (Virgil Bainbridge).

(We would) hang them up and cut them down the middle, take all the entrails out and then throw them on a heavy table, cut the hams off and the shoulders off. First thing you done was to take the ribs out. If you're not careful in taking out the ribs, you'd ruin your bacon, because your bacon goes right against the ribs. Then you would cut them up, quarter them; and then we would put them in a building called a smoke house and let them cool out over the night. Then the next day we would trim them (Willard Payton).

Hog butchering differed from that of beef in respect to the skin.

The beef, of course, (when) they butchered that, it was skinned. It (was) different from the scalding and scraping and scraping the hair. The skin on hogs was saved, but the skin on the beef was stripped off, and that hide was sold to fur traders (Frances Orr).

With hogs, the hair and other unwanted pieces were discarded.

We didn't use hair for nothing. Lot's of people didn't keep the hogs' heads and feet; and some of them wouldn't keep the liver; and some of them wouldn't even keep all the sausage, couldn't sell them. They would give them to you. I saw my dad come home with a gunny sack plum full of meat, the other stuff the people wouldn't want. They would tell him 'When you are done with that, come back, and I might have a side or something I don't want and let you have it.' Sometimes you would go work for a fellow, he would have an old side there and have some of last years killing. He would give it to you, he wouldn't sell it to you. They don't do that no more (Roy Bailey).

Two different alternatives for preservation were available. Pork was either smoked or sugar cured. Curing with smoke required a preliminary step of salting.

We salted it, before the sugar cured come out, use to have a big box. (We'd) just take that salt and lay a

shoulder or ham in there and cover it with salt and put one on top of it and cover with salt and put another one on top of it and just keep them coming. (We'd) put it all in the box and leave it there till spring. You could leave it in there till the ground went to thawing out and take it out when it would turn warm enough, somewhere around March or April, and hang it up and let it stay hanged up for three or four days. That water would stream out of it. (We'd) maybe build a fire under it and put it in a big place, and build a fire under it and smoke it, and let it smoke (Roy Bailey).

You take the hams and the bacon and like that and the backbone and the ribs, they cooked the backbone and the ribs. You cook them and put them down. But (for) the bacon and the hams, we had a big box in the smoke house. You laid papers down in there and take the hams and take loose salt and rub all over the meat on the back side on the skin side, and then you rub all over the other side the fresh side. Then you'd lay them down in the box and take about a handful (of salt) and lay it right on the ham. You done that until you got them all in there and the bacon the same way and put them in there and leave them until spring, leave them until about March. Then we'd take them out of there and hang them up and then smoke them (Virgil Bainbridge).

The most common place to smoke the meat was in a building known as the smoke house.

(For) two or three days you'd smoke it. You had to have a tight building so it could hold the smoke, you know (Willard Payton).

Your smoke house walls were very brown from smoking over all those years (Nannie Payton).

Smoking, like salting, required a set procedure.

You would leave it in the salt till three to four weeks, then take it up and brush the salt off, and we smoked it then. You would usually take an old lard kettle usually, so it wouldn't set the smoke house on fire. You always had to have an opening, so it wouldn't be too tight in there; but you had to have it pretty tight, so there would be a lot of smoke in there. You would put that green hickory wood in there, and it wouldn't blaze. Once you got it on fire, you kept piling that green hickory wood on there, and there would be a terrible lot of smoke. Every once in awhile you would just go in there and see if you had plenty of wood, but you usually do that for about 48 hours. That had a real good smoke taste. Then they would take it down and on the ends they would put a little bit of borax, that kept the fly bugs from getting about it. My father would

take and melt lard and take a paint brush and put it on the skin of those hams and shoulders. Then he'd put him in a sack and hang him up there, and that was all you had to do till you took them down and used them. That lard kept the skin from getting so hard (Jesse Edwards).

To smoke it, we'd use hickory smoke for about two days. Then we'd take it down and sprinkle borax on it to keep the worms out of it. Then we'd wrap it in paper and then slip it in a sack. We would hang them all summer. We'd slice that up, boy, it was good. You'd put that borax on it to keep the worms out of it. If you didn't the worms would get in. Then we'd wrap it and slip it down in a flour sack and hang it up. When you done that it would stay there for three or four years if you wanted it to (Virgil Bainbridge).

In later years the sugar cure method was introduced. This type of preservation was less complicated but, according to its users, produced equally tasty results.

Well, we got to where we smoked it, and then we sugar cured it. You use so much salt and so much brown sugar, so much red pepper, so much black pepper; and you'd rub that in and then wrap it and put it in a sack and hang it up in the smoke house. That's the way they cured it. I didn't smoke it at all in sugar cure. Boy, I wish you could eat a slice of that sugar cured ham. Oh, my God, it was good (Willard Payton).

Modern technology, with the creation of the electric refrigerator and introduction of the supermarket, brought an end to the need for community butcherings. Those who remember the end product of butchering attest to its superiority over what is available today.

I used to go out in the smoke house and take and cut out and take an old ham and take and cut it off. It would be dry and be the same as it would frying it. I saw sausage ground by the tub full, washing tub full. They don't do that no more (Roy Bailey).

You can't buy a piece of meat at none of these markets that tastes like fresh meat. You just can't do it. I'd love to have a piece of good old fresh meat (Willard Payton).

I remember we always ate too much fresh meat then (Irene Breckenridge).

Along with the lack of need for family butchering, regulations have also discouraged the practice.

Since the government stepped in there, there are so many things you just can't do. The government don't like (it). It has to be inspected, and so everybody quit killing hogs (Roy Bailey).

Butchering, like so many duties which were once standard farm activities, may become a lost art.

By the time we is gone, it will be gone, none of these young boys know nothing about that. The only ones that know about it is the ones working in the packing house. A fellow would have to work around a slaughter house before he would know anything about it. Everybody knew how to kill a hog in the country then (Roy Bailey).

Besides curing certain cuts of meat, two other tasks followed hog butchering. Those portions of the pig which were not cured were made into sausage; and, also, the lard had to be prepared by a process known as rendering.

You had to then trim the lean from the fat, and the lean went into sausage and the fat went into lard (Willard Payton).

The ingredients for sausage had to be ground. One area used mechanical means to complete this job.

Everybody brought their hogs, and everybody worked together. They used to set up a sausage mill on a big board platform. The handle would be tied to a car tire jacked up on one side of the car. You'd get the Model A Fords and jack up one wheel so it would clear the ground. The spokes in the handle would be tied with twine to the spokes of the wheel. You'd mount the sausage mill on two 5-gallon buckets, and a man would sit on that to hold it down, and another would feed this sausage through into a tub underneath. That was how we ground sausage back in those days (Charlie Taylor).

After grinding, the meat was stuffed.

We saved everything, we saved the intestines, brought them into the house. You got all the dirty part out of them that you could. Then you turned them wrong side out and stretched them more. Then you put in soda water until it almost took the hide off your hands, washed and cleaned them; and you stuffed them, and they were used for tape for sausage. They were spotless and white, you could see the meat through them. They were nice and clean. It was very time consuming and dirty work and smelly, but it was worth it (Nannie Payton).

An instrument was used to pack the meat.

They had what they called a sausage stuffer. You run it by hand with a crank. You put that, I'll call it hog gut, put that gut over that, and it would press that sausage in there just like they're pressed in down here (Willard Payton).

When the sausages were stuffed,

Then you cut them into sections, if you wanted to; or you wrapped them and hung them out in the smoke house (Nannie Payton).

Processing the fat of the hog is known as lard rendering. We had a great big kettle and you would stir it. It would have fire under it. (We) put the cracklings in it, the fat, the rinds in, and rendered the lard. It involved several days work and hard work. Women did a lot of it (Irene Breckenridge).

First the lard was cut into cubes.

You'd have to cut that lard up, the lard part of the hog or the bacon, trim it. After that cut it up in little square chunks so that it will cook, about like an inch square. Then you'd put it in a kettle, cooked it until . . . the meat in there turns brown and it'd all float (Virgil Bainbridge).

Cooking the lard took special care.

If overheated, it's gone. If it got a little brown it was discolored. You had to stir it carefully (over) a low fire . . . see to keep it white. You had to do it. Many of the neighbor women thought you had to have soda (Nannie Payton).

Use of baking soda in the lard was optional.

We had a neighbor by the name of Betty Breckenridge and she always put soda in hers. Well, she'd wait until that lard got pretty hot, you know; and then she'd come out and pour soda in that kettle. And foam, it'd just foam way up there, you know. It would just scare me to death, you'd think it would boil up and burn up. She said that it made your lard sweeter and whiter; but now, whether it did or not, I don't know. There was a world of people that didn't.

The cooked lard was further processed prior to storage.

Then you get the lard out of the kettle, and the lard press, and press the lard out of the press. (The press is) a round cylinder outfit, and it's about that tall, and it's got a crank and a plunger. You wind it, it's got a thread that you crank. You wind this plunger up to fill that. It holds about two gallons. You dip the lard out of there and pour it in there; and, of course, it had a strainer, and it holds the meat crumbs and things like that. When you got it full of the meat, why then you

pull this plunger, and you had a crank with pretty much power. It would go down there in that cylinder and mash that. If you just mash that, and if you got it cooked, if you would just mash that meat down there, it would just pack right together. It would mash all that lard out, and you had a spout there that would run off in a can. Boy, was that stuff hot. And we always took it then and put it in jars. We'd put it in big 10-gallon jars, crock jars, and let it cool. You had to watch, of course, with all this cold weather; and when you'd pour that hot lard in them cold jars, boy, they'd break them if you didn't watch. You had to pour some in and then let them get warmed up, and then fill them on up, fill them clear up. They'd cool, and that lard would be just as pretty and white; and you'd put a paper over or cover them with a jar. That's what we used to cook with (Virgil Bainbridge).

The meat remains which were strained from the lard were called cracklings.

The cracklings were good. You used to take them cracklings and make what they called crackling corn bread. You put it in the corn bread. They were good eating. Of course, there was quite a bit of flesh in there. These wasn't too much lean meat. They worked all the lard up from fat meat. There was very lean meat, of course; the hams and the backbone and stuff like that was lean meat. That was the muscle part of the hog. Of course, you trim the hams, too. There would be fat around the hams and you would trim the hams, and . . . cook it to get the lard out of it. I've rendered as high as 55 gallons of lard in butchering, rendered that much lard. A 300-pound hog would make about 5 gallons of lard or something like that (Virgil Bainbridge).

Although pork was the principal meat in the local diet, chicken and fish were also included.

My mother use to have a lot of those yellow-legged roosters that would be out on the fence. You would go out and get them and dress them, and they was awful good eating (Jesse Edwards).

Many of the varieties of fish which lived in the river were consumed as foodstuff. Different cooking techniques were required for each fish. Carp was given special treatment.

A lot of people turned up their noses at German Carp because they were bony. Now there was another fish we called the buffalo. It was white like, but they were a lot like carp, they had a few bones. You could score those fish. You take a great big slab of those fish, and you cut down through them with a cleaver or a good sharp knife--cleaver was the best--and leave the backs. You put them in a

pressure cooker a few minutes, put them under pressure, and those bones would be soft like a salmon. Then you take these carp, after you put them in that a little bit, then you could put them in some real hot grease, and you didn't bother with the bones. The only bones you would have would be them great big rib bones. Carp to me is a sweeter meat than the cat, but the reason people like the catfish is they aren't bony. People use to not pay no attention to scoring them. If they were afraid of the kids getting bones, they would make them eat a lot of bread, corn bread along with it; but those oldtimers, they learned how to score them fish (Jesse Edwards).

(White carp) were pretty bony. Of course we didn't know enough to score them and get rid of the bones. You can score a German Carp, if he isn't too awful big. You can score them and kind of deep fry them. Score them cross ways about every quarter inch with a sharp knife. White Carp never did get as big as the German Carp. They were bony fish (Eugene Arthur).

Most of the other items which completed the local diet were homegrown.

We'd buy flour and stuff like that, maybe a few things like that, but all the rest of the stuff we canned. Fruit and stuff like that, we canned it and had enough to run us (Virgil Bainbridge).

We used to make apple butter. We used to do that in the same big (lard) kettle. These big old things that you stirred it with were wooden, and they had holes, and you would stir the apple butter that way. Most of us had a little apple orchard. We raised our own fruit, that was part of it. We had peaches, apples and things like that (Irene Breckenridge).

Before commercial soft drinks were available, a natural sweet drink was obtained from the trees.

In the fall of the year - no spring - that's when you tap sugar maple trees. Well, these people bored the holes in the trees and put the spouts and then the sap run out in their buckets. Well, we would take a bottle each of us and go up there in the pasture and fill it and take this sap and drink it at school. Well, it was a sweet thing. If you didn't have Kool Aid, it wasn't bad. We didn't have it (Nannie Payton).

"Store bought" sweets were unusual and considered quite a treat.

In the summertime we could go to Smithville and get ice. That was always a big deal to go to Smithville and get ice and wrap it in burlap, carpet, paper, whatever, (and) take it home. Then on Sunday, we could have homemade ice cream and ice tea. Fruit like bananas and oranges and things like that, we seldom had them except at Christmas time (Frances Orr).

Automobiles and supermarkets have changed the manner in which the project area residents acquire their food. What were once exotic fruits and vegetables are common fare at the modern grocery store. As the work involved in providing food for their families has lessened so has the reliance of the community members on the land and on each other.

COMMERCIAL SERVICE AND BUSINESS

Throughout the Smithville Lake region, many business interests catered to the farm trade. Establishments such as the poultry house purchased products from the farmers for resale. Grain which was harvested for personal use and wood which was timbered for building were processed at the local mills. Although the agriculturalists provided the bulk of their own food, they were not completely self-sufficient. Certain items, such as dry goods and other provisions which were not produced in the area, were obtained at the local stores. During the times when horses and mules were the sole power source for travel and farm work, blacksmiths functioned in crucial roles. Specialty merchandise such as furniture, bottled soft drinks, and ice were purchased by rural folk as well as town dwellers. Newspapers and the mailman brought contact from within and outside the area.

Along with maintaining an inventory geared toward their rural customers, merchants also adjusted the monetary base to suit their patron's financial circumstances. Barter was an acceptable practice particularly in the trading of cream and eggs for groceries. Millers often took portions of the grain as payment for their services.

Many explanations exist for the decline of business within the project zone. The affect of cars and better roads, which provided easier access to Kansas City and St. Joseph, along with the changes in farming practices, and the transitions in population were all felt in the mercantile area. As residents have sought goods from outside the area, the small town shopkeepers and business persons have drifted toward extinction.

Mills

An important service for the agrarian community was performed by the saw and grist mills. The Ross mills at Paradise and the Taylor mills at Mecca fulfilled these functions for many years.

Originally the Ross Saw Mill was powered by water. Reuben Ross recalled his father's discussion of the first mill.

He put a water mill in, had a water wheel, but I don't remember that. We had a big flood, and it tore it all up. Then they put (in) this steam engine. I heard him say . . . that sometime in July the mill washed, but it was before my time. Then they put the steam engine in.

It was Clyde Taylor's job to "fire up" the steam engine in his father's saw mill. This required

probably two-thirds or three-fourths of a cord of wood a day. When I was eight years old, it was already sawed up for me; and all I had to do was split it, put it in the fire box. The fire box was about three feet long and 24 inches wide, and I expect it was about 24 inches high. I kept her going. The first thing you do is get what you call 'steam up'. You build you a fire; and of course, you got water in your boiler and the heat turns to steam. When you get up to about 150 pounds of pressure per square inch, you are ready for business. You open the throttle a little bit, and the old engine would chug along there and do anything you wanted it to do.

Use of the mill's equipment for the sawing of logs involved a detailed procedure.

It had a saw in it about 50 inches in diameter and would have about 48 teeth in it. You would throw your log onto the carriage, and the carriage was the thing that run by the saw with a log on it, and would take a slab, a part of the bark, sap knots and whatever. Then you would set your log out with the head locks. If you wanted an inch number, you set it out an inch. If you wanted two inches, you set it out two inches. You would run this by the saw again, and the saw would part her off. Then you would turn the log down on the head locks and take off the slab and the board and just continue. If you want 2 by 4, you would whip it into four-inch switch and turn it down and get your two by fours (Clyde Taylor).

Adjustments of the equipment for the size of board depended on the type of machinery.

The saw mill was altogether different than what it is now. Well, they have a ratchet now when you want to cut an inch board, why you pull a lever here, and it pushes the board over, and it cuts your board off an inch thick, and of course maybe it is a foot wide. But, what he had was screws, and I used to turn screws. Like when he wanted to cut an inch board, you would turn five times; and if you wanted to cut a 2 by 4, you would turn ten times. The screw pushed the log out on the headlock. There was two of them. You would have to turn this one and have to run up to the other end of the log and turn the other one five or ten times. If it was inch stuff, you know. If it was two inch or maybe four inch, you would have to turn twenty times (Reuben Ross).

Three people were required to operate the Ross Saw Mill equipment.

My father had a fellow firing the engine, and then he had a guy that carried the lumber back, and he run the mill himself.

According to Clyde Taylor, the number needed to run his father's mill was "ordinarily four".

Individuals using the services of the mill supplied their own lumber and paid a price as well as a "toll".

They would bring the logs into the log yard. We would take the logs from the log yard, put it into lumber for 50 cents a hundred, and we got the off-hauls, the slabs, sawdust, and so on. That was 50 cents a hundred board feet. It is about \$9 to \$10 per hundred (Clyde Taylor).

Various types of wood were cut at the mill for different uses.

Oak, we would saw that into fencing. That would be one-by-sixes. If they was going to build a barn, sometimes they would frame it out of oak. All kinds of lumber--sycamore, cottonwood, elm, walnut--threwed a lot away, wasted it. Walnut wasn't worth nothing then hardly. They used it for lumber, gate slats and things like that. If you sawed it into lumber, they wouldn't like it. It would just go to waste. They put it into furniture now (Clyde Taylor).

The grist mill served as a point of social gathering as well as its utilitarian purpose.

Saturday was a big day because you ground on Saturday (Reuben Ross).

After bringing in their grain,

some of them would leave, and some of them would visit, you know (Reuben Ross).

An example of the type of social activity at the mill was remembered by Reuben Ross.

Out on front of the burrows, he had a meal box. The meal come out in this box, and then you would sack it up later on. We got through grinding in the afternoon; and they was, oh, four, five boys and an older man sitting around in there talking. This older fellow's meal was in the box, he hadn't took it out yet. He was an old fellow with chin whiskers. One of the boys reached over and got a handful of meal and kind of smelt of it, and he says 'That smells sour.' This older fellow, that owned the meal, reached out over it and smell of it. If it was sour, he wanted to know of it, you know. Well, this boy grabbed it up in his face, got all in his whiskers. Well, he was a game old guy and pretty high tempered. Just as quick as he throwed this in his face, old Uncle Dick reached over and got him a handful, and he was going to put it in his face. This boy jumped up and ran out to the mill door on the north side. There was a big elm tree between there and the creek. Well, this old fellow run him around the tree three or four times, and he caught him, and throwed him down and rubbed this meal in his face.

The original grinding equipment is credited with producing a superior type of corn meal.

He had burrs. Later on they got to making it on different things, and it wasn't near as good (Reuben Ross).

This machinery was described by Clyde Taylor.

There was a pair of burrs, about 36 inches in diameter and approximately six inches thick. The bottom one and the top one was about the same thickness, only it had plaster of paris on top, about seven or eight inches thick, to add weight so we could grind corn faster. They called them quinch burrs because most of the flint rock was put in the burrs. They are discs with little grooves cut in them that were about a quarter inch deep, approximately three inches apart on the outside and went into the center to maybe about one inch. That was so the grain would come out them grooves and would come out there and got to rolling and roll up on the flat part of the burr and grind it into however coarseness you wanted. You could grind the meal to just cracked corn. The top burr was raised up. The more grain you put in, the wider the top burr would raise up. In later years we made a vess burr out of it. We took the plaster of paris off the thing and bolted a bar across the middle and made a screw like thing to squeeze that top burr on down to the bottom one, and we would squeeze that down there. It would run the meal too hot, and we quit that and put the plaster of paris back on and made a gravity pressure out of it. The heat made bad meal.

Figure 7.
Grinding Stone from Early Project Area Mill.
Courtesy of Lucille Taylor.



Both mills handled different types of grain.

He ground corn on Saturdays. People eat lots of meal in themdays, and they had chicken feed you know. Then he ground wheat too. A lot of people ate ground flour (Reuben Ross).

We would mix oats and corn together, and that made a good feed. Sometimes they would bring rye, and we would mix that with corn and sometimes we would grind it separate (Clyde Taylor).

A customer had an option when it came to payment.

If he didn't want to pay for it in money, he would take out toll. They could bring a sack of corn in there and get it ground, and you know a sack fills up faster after it is ground than before it is. They would come back and have a full sack of ground wheat, meal, hops, or something; and, of course, they would offer to pay. He would tell them he took out toll, so it wasn't very much (Reuben Ross).

Most generally, we took what they call toll. That was one-fifth. If they brought a bushel of corn in there, we took one-fifth of it and ground up the other batch and give it to them (Clyde Taylor).

Fewer people were required to run a grist mill than a saw mill.

It wouldn't take but two. One fellow he would fire the engine, and my daddy always tended to the burr part of it, meal and that part. A miller will always use his left hand to get the coarsest of the meal. They are always nearly right handed, and the skin is always tougher than that of the left hand. They could feel the coarseness of the grain with the left hand that they couldn't detect with their right. That was the miller for you (Clyde Taylor).

Other mills were also located in the project area. The Patterson Mill was located in Smithville.

Well when I'm speaking of this Patterson Mill, it's a building across from the stream to the south. It was a long building where they had the mill and the flour and all of that. The water wheel (was) propelled by the dam (Nannie Payton).

Another mill operated at Edgerton.

For cereal we ground the wheat and had the graham with cream and sugar, it was a cereal; and then you made your muffins from it. Now the way we got that and our flour, Willard would go in the wagon to Edgerton in the wagon to the mill. They didn't have the mill at that time down here, I don't think. About 20 miles he would drive, and usually a neighbor would go. They put their wheat in this

wagon, and it took usually about a day to go and come and get it done. They would take care of our wheat and we'd come back with flour, sacks of flour, enough for the winter, and then we had the graham. That was our winter supply of flour (Nannie Payton).

I can remember going with my father over to Edgerton, Missouri, to have corn ground (into) the meal. There was a mill over there, and we would go over there and have the corn ground for meal that we had to eat and get our flour over there when I was a child. (We took) the corn that we raised ourselves. I still prefer yellow corn meal. We had some white too, but yellow was better (Irene Breckenridge).

Grain was also ground at the Hickson Mill.

The big red bridge was often called Hickson Mill Bridge and at the west end of the red bridge was the Hickson Mill which ground corn into meal at that time. My grandfather Shannon lived east of it and a little south of this Hickson Mill Bridge. I can remember as a child going with him taking the white corn over to the mill and having it ground into meal. That was quite an experience, you know. All I remember is that we would take this white corn over in gunny sacks, burlap bags in other words, and of course, they ground the meal and put it in paper bags, and we took it back home. As a child, it seemed like an awful amount. To me today, we maybe got 25 pounds of meal in return. That was good corn meal, nice and fresh (Alta Martin).

The meal resulted from this grinding differed in taste and preparation from that sold today.

There is no comparison whatever. The meal we ground wouldn't keep like store bought meal because it had the heart and stuff in it (Clyde Taylor).

You would have to sift it to get the bran out of it. Sift it out and give the bran to the chickens (Reuben Ross).

As with other modern conveniences, the oldtimers suspect that their products were better. In any event, watching the grinding process was no doubt a more interesting adventure than today's practice of buying flour at the local supermarket.

The Poultry House

Operators of poultry houses purchased a wide variety of items. Not only were these establishments interested in poultry products, but they also paid premiums for the pelts brought in by hunters.

I hunted rabbits, squirrels, went hunting at night and catch opossums, coons and pole cats, and all them things back in themdays. A pole cat isn't as big as a skunk. Skunk he is the biggest, but the both of them has got the same odor. I would lay a trap for them. I've caught beavers and everything like that. Skin them and bring them to town and sell the hide and things like that. We used to go all the time and catch hides and sell them (at Plattsburg) down at the poultry house. We use to skin horses and cows and everything like that, bring them here to town and sell them, sell the hide (Roy Bailey).

Hunting was not a lucrative profession, but some profit could be realized from the right type of skin.

You just skinned (skunk), took it up here to Paradise to the poultry house, and you sold it, and maybe it would bring \$1. That was just another dollar to do something else with. You could sell opossums and skunks; and occasionally, some of the men around would kill a fox. (There were) always a few that had coon hounds, and they hunted coon at night, and those pelts were worth something. We are talking about in the early '20's, '30's. Pelts didn't bring that much. Coon was worth maybe \$1.50, and fox maybe worth \$3 and skunk \$1, opossum maybe 60 to 80 cents. This past winter a red fox would bring maybe \$80 to \$90, and a coon was worth \$35 to \$40, and coyote pelt was worth \$35 to \$40. We sold them in Paradise. When I was a boy, big enough to hunt--so we are going to get into the early '30's--there was a man that ran a poultry house up here by the name of Ben King, but all the boys and all the men in the country that is where we brought all our pelts and sold them to him. Rabbits, you would get out and kill a rabbit, gut it, hang it up, take it to Paradise on about a Thursday or Friday, and he would give you a dime apiece for them. On Saturday morning, he loaded a truck up and took all the things to Kansas City to the open market, and sold them to people, just like they laid. Well the rabbits was full of hair, they were gutted and not ever skinned; and, no doubt, they were a mess, but people in Kansas City bought those things, and they cooked them, and they ate them right off his truck (Buster Summers).

Besides buying animal hides, the poultry houses engaged in purchases of chickens and eggs. The term 'poultry house' was derived from this activity.

(Ben King) bought eggs, and he bought chickens, and they toured around. He had routes and each day he went a different direction. All this was mud road; but every day, he had a different route, and he would go come to your home. If the women's chickens were laying and everything was going good, he would buy a few dozen eggs; and, maybe

they had a couple of old roosters or couple three old hens that they wanted to sell, and he bought them. He took those back to the poultry house, and he fed them and took care of them. On Saturday, all that went to the market and was sold and taken care of, and Monday morning he started again. I don't know what he called it except Mr. Ben King run the store, run the poultry house. The building has been gone for years and years. It would be just north of the brick buildings that are standing there in Paradise, right there on the corner. Then there used to be an old man that his name was Ben Moore, and that is all that I ever knew he did was run a poultry route around over the country and buy old hens, chickens, roosters, and that type of thing . . . and take them to Kansas City and sell them. About the same time both those men were operating. The thing about that time was three-fourths of the people in this country bought all their groceries that they had off the sale of chickens that weren't laying or something (Buster Summers).

The poultry houses which once did business in Plattsburg and Smithville are no longer in operation.

General Stores

General stores were, at one time, more than simple retail establishments. The merchandise line carried by these stores included every type of item necessary for day-to-day life. Not only were the stores centers for exchanging goods, but the buildings also served as meeting places for the local farmers and townspeople. Contrary to current lifestyles where grocery shopping is often considered an unpleasant duty, going to the store was once looked upon as a major form of entertainment.

Various stores were located within the project area over the years. At least one store had memorable features.

There was a store here in Plattsburg, run by Mr. Swank and his wife. . . but it was called New York Store. They had a sign that had 'New York Store' on it. It looked like a rig of some kind with wheels. I knew we was close to town when we saw the New York Store sign. Mr. Swank has been dead a number of years, his widow runs the store uptown here yet. The store had these baskets you sent up, and they went to where they wrap the packages and the pay thing was, and I thought that was pretty fascinating (Irene Breckenridge).

Mecca had two stores at one time.

My father was Hugh Albert Shannon, otherwise known as Bert. Mother's name was Mary Ann Shannon; and we lived in Mecca then. My father owned the store and I worked in it. My father's store was the store, the big main store, that is now at this time of the year up on wheels sawed in two ready to be moved (Alta Martin).

Regular trips, usually on Saturday, were made by farmers bringing eggs and cream to exchange for groceries or money.

They didn't have a farmers market. When they brought their goods in and sold it, they brought their cream and eggs into grocery stores and sold them there (Charlie Taylor).

The grocery stores would take a lot of the eggs; and, of course, they would trade for groceries, you know. The poultry houses would usually take care of the cream situation. Some of the grocery stores did, too (Robin Lewis).

We would go down to do our trading as they called it. You traded eggs and cream for most of your groceries. (The store) is where they candled the eggs and tested the cream. It was the Shannon store, before that it was another. I can't think of the name now, but they had the store for a long time. Then Mr. Bert Shannon had it. It was just a little country store down at the foot of a tall hill that will be flooded when the lake comes through. We would go to Mecca to take the eggs and cream and buy groceries at times (Irene Breckenridge).

Eggs were candled to make sure an embryo had not formed.

In those days, it was very crude. It was a kerosene lamp behind a kind of cardboard there with a hole in it. You held your eggs up to this and looked through and showed you whether the egg was all right or if it wasn't. You learned how to tell by the yolk of the egg you know (Alta Martin).

Like eggs, cream was also inspected by the grocer to ascertain its value in trade or dollars.

All of them had milk cows and they would milk the milk cow and save the cream (to be) sold. So they would bring maybe the eggs, probably worth 15 to 20 cents a dozen, and maybe cream was worth 10 cents a pound or something of that sort. They had a test they ran on it, and it was according to butterfat. They paid you for that. If you could raise \$1 to \$2.50 a week. . . selling the eggs, chickens, cream, by George, that would buy all the groceries that you could use (Buster Summers).

Chemicals and equipment were needed to test the cream.

My duties, of course, as a child, were to candle eggs and test cream, and I learned to test cream. You would take a cream sample, and we had little scales, cream scales. You would put a sample of cream in one little vial bottle setting on one end of the scales, and you would put acid in the other one and put on the other end of the scales and balance the scale. That showed how much to use. Then you poured this acid into this cream. You put it into a big round iron (receptacle), looked sort of like an iron kettle. It had a little frame around it, and each one of these vials set in this frame in a little container. You put the iron lid down, and then you turned it by hand for so many revolutions and let loose till it died down. That spin would mix the acid in the cream, and you took an instrument and measured that, and that told you how much butterfat. Your cream was sold by how much butterfat (there) was per pound (Alta Martin).

Groceries were less expensive at general stores than the cost of similar items today.

The thing is, all the people bought in those (days) was flour, coffee, sugar, and meal. My wife and I have the first shopping list that we had when we were first married, and I don't recall how many items there are, but there were 18 to 20 items that cost us a grand total of \$4.80. I had this, and I walked into the Big V at Smithville, at the grocery down there, and I asked him if he could fill that order the same way it was filled before. The first thing he saw was black pepper; and I don't recall what we give for it, but it will be on there, 15 cents I think. He says, 'I know that will cost you 85 cents.' So there has been a big increase. You worked in the '30's and early '40's for maybe \$1, \$1.50 a day, and what they got would buy their groceries. That is the way people supported themselves. You could take \$1 and go to the grocery store, and you could buy more groceries than you could carry out in two paper sacks (Buster Summers).

The manner in which food was sold also differed from the current type of commercial packaging.

The peanut butter came in a five gallon bucket, and they took a spatula, and they dug that out and put it in a little wooden tray of some kind and wrapped it in wax paper. That is the way you got the peanut butter. Sugar, meal, flour, brown sugar, beans, et cetera, were mostly in 5, 10, or 20 pound sacks (Buster Summers).

Besides the main purpose of vending groceries, the stores also filled an important social function.



Figure 8.
Interior of Dry Goods Store in Smithville.
Courtesy of the Smithville Historical Society.

It was a one-room store. It had long counters, and there were chairs. The 'Sit and Whittle Club' would sit and whittle, especially in the wintertime with the stove going and the fire, and people visited. It was a place for people to visit (Irene Breckenridge).

In the evening the folks would gather around after supper and usually have (a) rook game in the store in the evening. It is a card game. They would set up a barrel with a flat board on top of it and gather around with their nail kegs to sit on or an old chair or a wooden box--which were plentiful then--turned upside down for a chair and play rook maybe till midnight (Alta Martin).

The activity, atmosphere, and appearance of the Shannon general store in Mecca was described in a poem written and recited by Alta Martin.

Village Store

A wonderful place was my father's store,
In the friendly village small
Although the QO and KC train ran through our town,
We hardly made the map at all.
Farmers brought their cream and new laid eggs,
And traded them for sugar and spice,
Or socks, shoes, and underwear
To keep off the chill of the night.
They liked to trade at my father's store,
He carried a full line of goods,
Galoshes, caps, and overalls,
Candies, cookies, and breakfast foods,
Muslin, matches, and calico, and mittens,
Buckets, pans and pails,
Brooms, mops and school supplies,
Needles, nuts, bolts and nails.
A great meeting place was my father's store,
Where a pot bellied stove provided heat.
Horses were tied to the hitching rail.
Children played tag in the street.
A gasoline pump, a cylinder, or a span,
Provided the Model T's needs.
People had time to sit and chat,
Or perform a neighborly deed.
I will remember my father's store
Where the cream tester was turned by hand,
The cracker barrel, ball blueing, putnam die,
Plug and smoking tobacco, finest in the land.
Elections were held at my father's store,
In a portion of the back store room.
The judges and clerks took their place
And mother served them lunch at noon.

If you never traded at my father's store.
You missed a lot, you see.
You could even order a hand-out lunch
Of soda pop, cookies, crackers, and cheese.
Gone forever is my father's store,
Those days have vanished and gone,
Soon rushing flood waters will cover the ground
Where my father's village store stood on.
And my father was Bert Shannon.

Furniture manufacturing

For a period of time the Jenkins Chair Factory produced furniture in Smithville. A Jenkin's Chair is a ladder-back, rush seat, four-rung kitchen chair. A common style at the turn of the century. Observing the operation was interesting for young people.

There by the light plant was the chair factory, ran by a man named Jenkins. They built a chair that we called the 'Jenkins chair'. He would let me come in and watch if I didn't bother anyone (Jim Justus).

The owner of the company, Joe Jenkins, provided other services besides making furniture.

(The factory) was up there right close to the railroad . . . right due east of that (Christian) Church and just west of the railroad. There was building there. The old man Jenkins he, well, he ground meal and wheat and stuff like that and made cornmeal, and he made these chairs. We got two of them, and I think there is one in the basement. I think we got three good table and chairs. They was operating, I guess, long in 1908, '09, '10, along in there. You could still buy them when we was married, I think (Claud Porter).

Products from the Jenkins Factory can now be found only in local homes or antique shops.

Newspapers

News about events in the Smithville Lake region was often disseminated by word of mouth; however, weekly newspapers were popular means of obtaining information. Robin Lewis recalled the operation of the newspaper's equipment.



Figure 9.
Jenkins Chair Factory. Courtesy Smithville
Historical Society.

The early press had an intimate relationship with the local bakery.

(The old printing press), you hand fed that rascal. It was power driven. At one time, when they first were using that press--I don't know when they got that, it was a considerable long time ago--but, there was a bakery behind the old shop. All the machinery in the print shop was driven by a little steam engine, and the bakery had a boiler they used for their stuff back there. They had a little engine that ran their dough mixing machine and one thing or another. They fired up the boiler on Thursdays, and we fired up the old press.

Later, a different power source was acquired.

Then they got hold of one of these little hit and miss gasoline engines, one of these 2/5 engines. They would work about half a day to get that thing started, so you could go to press. When I started there, they had the electric motor in there, it was electric driven at that time. Every sheet had to be hand fed through it. Took it off there, put it on the folder, and ran it through the folder in single sheets. The first operation, working at the place I did, was on the folder. You just put a stack of papers on your folder table; you have got stops for the paper, of course, to guide. You would take hold of them, get a little corner of the paper and give it a little flip and that thing would just slip right in there. Put a little air under it, and it would slide right in.

Printing the paper occurred on specific days and utilized different types of processes over the years.

We printed one on Wednesday night, printed our inside pages. On Thursday, we put our front page on. The front page and the back page was printed on Thursday. This folder--you would just put that full sheet--made two folds and would go through that second fold, and a pair of rollers there trimmed and cut the paper, cut the paper in two and came out all folded and ready to mail, just like it is today. That was all hand operation. We did have a Linotype. I don't remember when we got the Linotype. For years the whole paper was hand-set. All of your news and all that was set up on that (Linotype). Of course, your ads were set up on it, too; but we all had two different sizes of type to go with that. Most of the ads and everything was hand-set. I finally had to get in and learn to hand-set type. I used to run the Linotype some, I never did get fast at it though.

During the racetrack era, the newspaper office had a secondary printing occupation.

We had two job presses, besides the old newspaper press. When the old racetrack was running, we printed all the score cards, the race forms every day. We bought another Linotype, another job press. Then when I was busy, because they would print the race forms, I would go over and get the stuff in the morning. They would print the race forms before race time, and I would have to be back over there with a whole arm load of those racing forms. The time I wasn't busy, I spent the time sharpening pencils. You had to have sharp pencils, because when they put out forms, if they didn't have a pencil, they wanted one then.

Word processors have made the Linotype machines obsolete; however, using modern equipment, the Smithville Democrat-Herald is still publishing news about the project area every week.

Apollo Soda

One of the longer lasting business ventures in Smithville was the Apollo Lithia Springs bottling works. The founder of the company began selling water and eventually produced a soft drink beverage after discovering the mineral content of a local spring. Originally, the spring water was sought for medicinal purposes.

Now my grandmother, in about 1898 or '99, had a gallbladder attack and was taken to Kansas City, and they removed the gallstones. The doctors told her that she would have to drink either lithia water or beer, or these stones would come back. So they came back to town, and she started drinking beer. My grandfather opened a saloon, cold beer, whiskey, and all that sort of thing and got kicked out (by) the local Baptist Church. She was buying her water out of Kansas City, and they missed a delivery. So my grandfather said to her, he said 'Darling, why don't you try some water out of this Smith well? It tastes just like what you're buying.' So he . . . came over to the Smith well and got a bucket of water and took it over, and she drank that; and it did taste so similar to what she was buying, that they had a doctor test the two waters and found that there was practically no difference in what she was buying and what they were pulling out of the well. So then my grandfather bought the property (Link V. Evans).

A structure had been built above the source of the mineral spring known as Smith well.

There was a 40-foot well, hand dug. I was told, by slave labor. I don't know how true that is. It was about, between four and five feet across and rock walled, 40-foot deep. I found that in the bottom six or seven feet there are little pipes that come out between the rocks, and the water drips out of those pipes. You can take your finger, break it off, and it looks like rust. This water, in testing it, is found to have a very high manganese content. This is one of the minerals. Now my grandmother was told, and this occurred before they bought the property, she was told that this water was a mineral water and that it was lithia water. That accounts for the name Lithia Springs. There are actually springs in the bottom. When you pump it out, why, it runs out through these little pipes to refill (Link V. Evans).

Reported healthful benefits of the water made it a popular beverage.

The deck well is still kept up, but, of course, they don't make the soda pop. My grandfather used to carry water from that spring for (my) kidney trouble; and, after I was operated on in 1925, we carried water from that spring (Lucile Wright).

Even after the sody pop factory was put in, they sold water out of the well. People would come here with gallon jugs and five-gallon containers and that sort of thing and buy water for drinking water. (A) story is even told (about) a local merchant in town. The story is that he would go down to the well that was just a little ways from the store building . . . and get water and take it up and put it on the counter. Then (he would) go out the back door and come down to the Smith well and get water to take back down for him to drink (Link V. Evans).

After the discovery of the superior qualities of the spring water, the Evans family established the soda pop factory and later built a house nearby.

In 1902 (Charles Evans) bought the property that (Apollo) House stands on clear back to Church Street and then over to Commercial. He built a sody pop factory on the back of (the) lot next to Church Street (Link V. Evans).

The Evans' residence boasts an outstanding monument to the Greek God after whom the soda was named. A statue of Apollo is poised on the spire of the house.

In 1904 the house was built and that was the year that the World's Fair was in St. Louis. He and my grandmother took the three children to St. Louis and attended the World's Fair. While they were there, they saw the statue of Apollo. Now the name of the pop factory was Apollo Lithia Springs. My grandmother named the pop factory; and then,

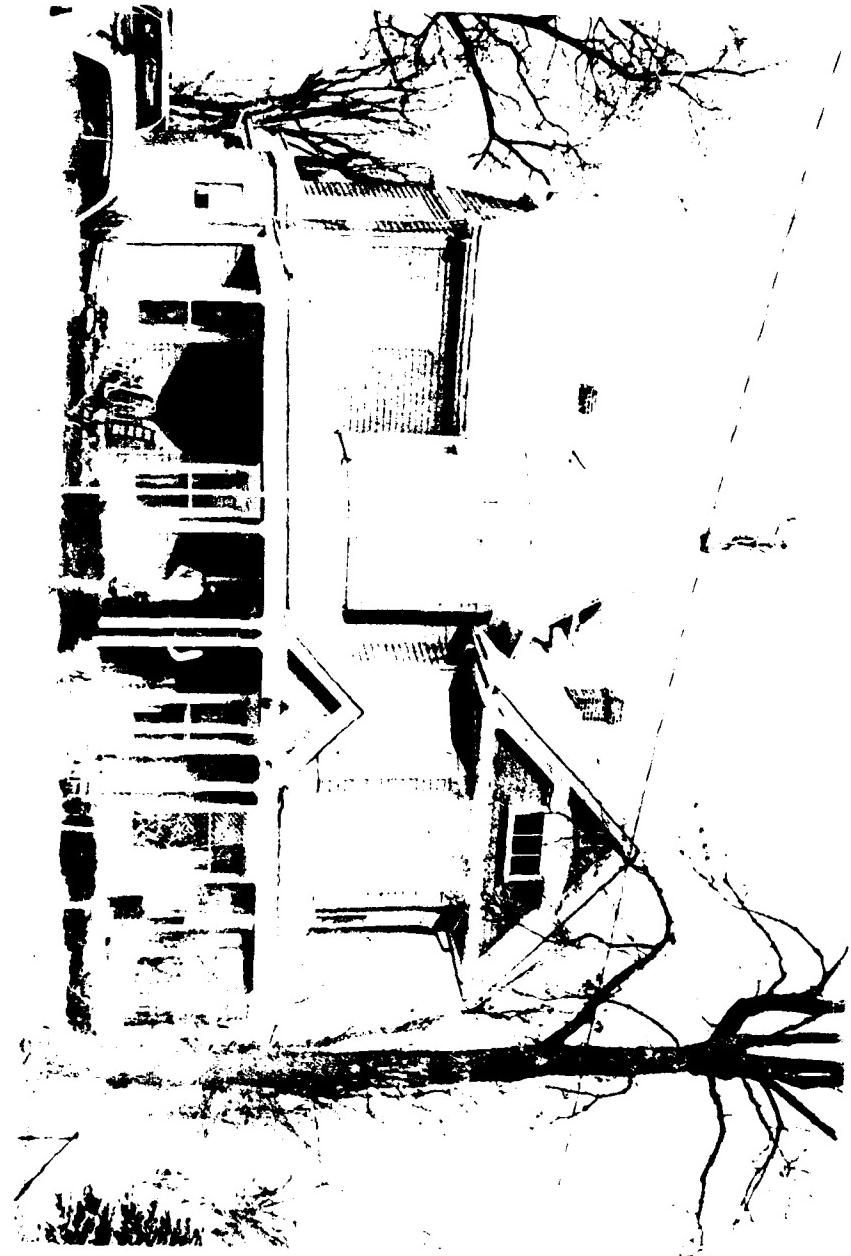


Figure 10.
Apollo House in Smithville.

when she saw the statue of Apollo, she said, 'Charlie, we've got to have the statue for the house.' The steeple was being built (then). They purchased the statue and brought it back and put it on the house, and this place then became known as Apollo Temple or Apollo House. (The statue is) a bronze, bronze shell. I don't think it's real heavy because it's a thin shell-like type thing rather than solid bronze. I have frequently said, 'If Apollo could talk, half the people in Smithville would have to leave town (Link V. Evans).

From the beginning, the bottling company was owned and operated by the Evans family although local residents worked at the plant.

In the early days, of course, my grandmother operated the equipment, and my grandfather did the distributing. Then as the (children) came along, why, they worked into the operation. You can still talk to people in Smithville today that washed bottles in the old pop factory. My uncle stayed with the grandparents, and then as they got into years, he continued to run the soda pop factory. It was not a big operation, but the biggest part of the operation, I mean the time they produced the most pop, I'm sure, was during the time of the racetrack (Link V. Evans).

Originally, a mule drawn vehicle delivered the soda; however, transportation by truck occurred in later days.

My grandfather first started out the pop distribution with a spring wagon and a team of mules. Then, I think it was about 1908, he bought the first International truck that ever hit Clay County. They went to Kansas City and bought it, brought it down to the ferry--no bridge across the river at that time--brought it down to the ferry; and they hired a team of mules to pull it up on the ferry and then transported it over to Clay County and brought it on out, started hauling the pop all round over the area with the truck. In the early days they would (go) by buggy, and they'd go to Platte City and come down through Fairview and Linkville and Nashua and come home. Another day they would go to Liberty, they would come up to Kearney and Latham, and come home. Another day they'd go to Plattsburg and Gower and Trimble and Edgerton and Durban and come home. This was in the early days with the spring wagon. Then, of course, when they got the truck, why they could make more of that route, see. They'd probably go to Plattsburg and come clear around to Kearney and then come back home, and another day they'd go to the north and dispense in those towns there (Link V. Evans).

A second factory building was constructed as the business expanded.

They built here at the corner of the house a two-car, two-storey garage with a whole building upstairs. The second

storey became the pop factory. It was arranged so that on one side the truck could be driven in in bad weather or good weather and the empties could be handed up and the heavies handed down into the truck, and then you could drive on out. Doors on both ends, and you just went right on through. This operated then until 1942 when the bottling works was closed in 1942 (Link V. Evans).

Children enjoyed visiting the plant.

I used to love to go over there because Mr. and Mrs. Evans, they always use to give me a free bottle of pop. Now that was quite an attraction for kids you know (Lucile Wright).

Two different types of bottles were used at Apollo Lithia Springs over the years of production. The earliest bottle was:

What is known as the Hutchinson bottle, and they used a Hutchinson bottling machine. It's the same spelling as Hutchinson, Kansas, because the equipment was designed and first manufactured in Hutchinson, Kansas. Now, I think they bought their bottles at Lawrence, Kansas, and their machine. Of course, it's long since gone (Link V. Evans).

Later the company switched to containers which were closer to the conventional soda bottles of current times.

There was only one transition, as far as I know, the old Hutchinson to a regular type bottle (Link V. Evans).

One of the main jobs in the plant involved scouring the bottles.

The way to clean these bottles, they used shot. (They) put it in a tumbler and rolled it so that the (lead) shot rolled around and around and around the bottles (Link V. Evans).

Filling the bottles required particular caution.

In the very early days when they bottled this pop, there were some bottle failures. You didn't have the control in those days over the amount of gas in a bottle that you've got today. I think most of it was by-guess-and-by-gosh as well as what controls they may have had. While they didn't have OSHA then, my uncle and my dad, I don't know about my grandfather, but people who run the bottling machines, in those early days in particular, wore a face mask made of screen wire and wore leather cuffs and gloves, leather gloves and leather cuffs, and a leather apron to protect themselves from bottle failures (Link V. Evans).

Derivation of the term "soda pop" resulted for characteristics of the early bottles.

The first bottles all over the country were like Apollo's. This piece of wire came up and had a piece of rubber on the top of this little button here. The pop was put in, and the gas was put in then on top, and there was a little finger from the machine that picked this up after the gas was put in. So the gas came against and kept (the stopper) up. That kept the compression in. You'd go to the grocery



Figure 11.
Hutchinson Type Soda Bottle First
Used by Apollo Lithia Springs.

store and buy a bottle of pop, and the grocerman would take it over and bring it up under the countertop and knock that deal down far enough, that wire down far enough, that the gas would escape. When he did, it made a popping noise, 'soda pop'. (Link V. Evans).

Thus the title was onomatopoetic of the opening of the bottles.

Sales of Apollo Soda were aided by the healthful affects attributed to the spring water from which it was made.

Now in 1902 when this operation was started, there was one bottling works in Kansas City and one bottling works in Smithville, and one bottling works in St. Joe. One of the things that I think promoted the bottling works in the early days was the fact that the water was tested and was found to be a mineral water. It was known over the country that the water was considered to have a medicinal value (Link V. Evans).

The soft drink was dissimilar to those sold today.

It didn't have the bite of Coke and the carbonated drinks that we have today. It was a sweet tasting flavor (Link V. Evans).

Several varieties were offered.

Oh, they had, of course I don't know whether they had rootbeer or not, but they had orange and lemon and grape. We used to buy it by the case. I think it was something like 60 cents a case then (Lucile Wright).

It had all different flavors. The biggest seller of all, and that's what you judge it by, was the cream (flavor) (Link V. Evans).

The taste was not appealing to everyone.

I really don't remember too much what it did taste like. It wasn't too extra good, if I remember right (Lucille Taylor).

Apollo soda was more popular than its competitor, Coca Cola, in the early days.

My grandfather had the Coke franchise at one time and carried it around--this was after the truck came along--carried it around with the Apollo Lithia Springs soda pop. And if people wouldn't buy it, two reasons. Number 1, it had the bite to it, and they weren't used to that. And No. 2 was they were told that it had, and I think in the early days it did have, a drug in it. So, people wouldn't buy it. He gave (up) the franchise. It would (have) made him immensely wealthy (Link V. Evans).

World War II and competition with larger manufacturers brought an end to the Evans family's bottling enterprise.

The soda pop factory existed from 1902 until 1942. In 1942 the sugar rationing and the pressure from the big poppers crowded the small operations out (Link V. Evans).

The bottles from the plant are now collectors' items.

Now if you go around to local antique shops and sales, you can find those selling for oh, from six to ten dollars apiece (Link V. Evans).

Nothing remains of the plant building.

The pop factory washed away completely in the 1965 flood (Link V. Evans).

Apollo, however, maintains his vigil watching the town of Smithville standing as a reminder of the beverage which bore his name.

The Mail Carrier

Letters mailed from outside the project area and those sent elsewhere traveled on the trains. Transporting the mail to and from the trains as well as delivery to the rural areas was the responsibility of the post man. Watching for the mail was a duty of the children.

We called him 'Uncle Sam'. His name was Morgan Buckhouser, really; but I always knew him as Uncle Sam. We could see over the second hill south of us; and my mother would send me out and look for Uncle Sam, so she could get her letter finished and I could get it down to the mailbox. He drove a little two-wheeled cart over most of the time, and if it rained he had a buggy that had side curtains. That was my memory of the mailman. He was a nice old man, but a little dour. He was going north coming from Plattsburg, and it was quite a way to the next box (Irene Breckenridge).

(We lived) on the mail route of Platte City. About five minutes till 1:00, there was a man by the name of Sam Galvery had the mail route. You could almost set your watch on his twenty-seven miles of mail route coming through that (covered) bridge. I can remember very well by watching off our front porch when he would come through that bridge. He had a heavy two-wheeled cart. The horse that he was driving dropped dead in Mr. John Heath's gate. So he bought this mare from Mr. Heath and hitched it to his cart, and he drove the mare about 75,000 miles over this mail route. She died at the same spot practically where he hitched her. It was a number of years he drove her, because he knew how many miles it

was around the mail route. He drove her that many miles, approximately three times around the world. He would make up his mail as he went along. After he drove this mare awhile, he didn't even have to guide her, he could just lay his lines down and pack up his mail as he went along. I would just look forward to (seeing him). I would be playing around the bridge. Mr. Galvery was out of Platte City, and he was a one-legged man. He had no fear of this horse at all. She was very efficient. . . she was more regular than an automobile would be now (Jesse Edwards).

In town, the post office had mail delivered from the train station by the mail carrier.

Right here in Smithville there was an old fellow that had a spring wagon, and he would meet the train every morning up there at the depot and bring it down to the post office (Reuben Ross).

At that time all the mail was brought from the depot down in a horse and buggy to the post office. An old fellow by the name of Burt Exxon hauled it for years and years. Meet the train up there and get the mail then bring it down to the post office (Willard Payton).

Other occupations could interrupt the postal service.

The old man that used to carry their mail from the post office up to the railroad station had an old mare that pulled the cart that carried the mail back and forth up there. One time the old man was down on the creek bank, by golly; and he had got interested in fishing and forgot about going and getting his mail. The first thing he heard of was, by golly, the train coming down the track and whistling into town. The old man's words was 'My God Lucy, I done missed her.' He went and got his horse right quick, and he like to beat that old mare to death coming to town to get that mail and take it up to the post office. Some of the boys around town knew just exactly what happened when he didn't show up, and they'd already headed up there for him (Robin Lewis).

The mail carrier was also susceptible to the pranks of the local boys.

(One) boy stole the old mare when she was in heat, by golly, and got her bred; and the old man didn't know nothing about it. She had a mule colt. The old man thought the old mare was just a getting fat. He went to the barn, by golly; and the mare had 'n' that colt that night. He come back--and his wife was named Lucy--and he come running back to the house and says, 'My God Lucy, there is a damn mule out there in the barn' (Robin Lewis).

Horse drawn mail carts and their drivers, once fixtures in the Smithville Lake region, no longer bring news and amusement to the local residents.

The Blacksmith

In the days when most transportation was provided by horse and buggies, the blacksmith played an important role. Several shops were located within the project zone.

My grandad had a blacksmith shop there in Paradise. It was downstairs underneath the old theatre. I remember when they built the theatre--I couldn't have been over about three years old, I guess, when they build it; but they had an old tar paper building on the other side of the street that they had the old blacksmith shop in. At one time there was three blacksmith shops in Paradise (Robin Lewis).

Smithville had two or three blacksmith shops (Charlie Taylor).

Clyde Taylor described some of the work performed in his blacksmith shop in Mecca.

My brother-in-law, he shoed horses, mostly horses and mules; and we done woodwork. We cut wagon wheels down. The wooden wheel wagons would get too much dish in them. That dish is concave, and you would cut them spokes off. If you had a 48 inch wheel, you would cut it down to about a 42, that is hind wheel I am talking about. You cut the spokes off, cut tin on and put a rim on, cut the tire in two, weld it back together, and get it with about 5/8 inch draw. Your tire would be 5/8 inch less than the wood around the wheel. (You) throw that old iron tire in the fire and heat her up pretty hot and set her down in cold water until she was tight. They was one time down there we had 27 tires in a fire at one time, and they was four of us putting the tires on, and we was busy. We made sleds, wagon beds, hog houses, hay frames, we made everything. We did right smart machine work there.

Fitting buggy wheels was a major service at the Martin Blacksmith Shop which was also in Mecca.

The first thing I remember doing in (my father's) shop was when they used to cut down buggy wheels and wagon wheels and shrink tires on them. They had a machine that you (use to) cut a buggy wheel down. It had a thing on there that you turned by hand to turn the end of the spoke down, so the fellow would fit on. It is the part that goes around the wheel that fits on the spokes, then the tire goes over that to make the wheel. The fellow comes

in wood, and it comes in pieces, probably four or five of them, I don't remember which. Each wheel curved to fit the wheel, then the tire was shrunk over that. You heat the tire, you heat the iron, and you get it red hot. Of course, we built a fire with wood and stuff and got it red hot and have this wheel on a frame, drop that tire over it, and the tire was just loose as it could be. It would just fall off. Then when we got it where we wanted it, we would fasten it with clamps. Then we would pour water on it right quick to keep it from burning the wheel--it would smoke and burn--but not too quick and cool it. As it cooled it shrunk and made the tire tight. Now on buggies they put little bolts through them between each spoke, a little bolt that goes through to hold them on. Wagons didn't have anything on them, they were just shrunk on. If you shrunk a tire too much, you would put what you called a dish in your wheel. You had to have a dish to make the wheel stand up, some dish; but, if you put too much, it would make it weak. So you had to know how much to shrink it, that wheel, to put the proper dish in it or not too much. I was too small. The only thing I would do was to put those bolts in the buggy wheels and had a little old wrench and tightened the taps on them. My dad would drive the bolts in and would hand me the taps, nuts, and I put them on and tightened them up. I did turn the old hand grinder some, not too much, to sharpen discs; but I wasn't big enough to do too much. I cranked the forge for him, it was a hand forge on the blacksmith blower, to make the fire go (Hugh Martin).

Keeping the local horses shod was another important task of the blacksmith.

I liked to watch them shoe horses. My dad hired a man part of the time. My dad was a big fellow, he weighed 256 pounds and (was) awful stout, and he hired a man to work for him that weighed about 125 that was just almost as stout. That is to show the difference between the two men. I was fascinated with them shoeing horses and the different things they would do (Hugh Martin).

As automobiles became the main source of transportation, the number of horse drawn vehicles declined; and, therefore, the need for blacksmiths decreased. Thus, this type of shop disappeared from the local scene.

WEEKENDS AND LEISURELY ACTIVITIES

Community gatherings within the Smithville Lake region occurred on a regular basis. Neighbors joined together in times of trouble, as noted in the section on floods, and for mutual work, which is discussed in the chapter on farming. Residents of the area were also united for social and spiritual events. Similar to their interaction for subsistence purposes, friends and families relied on each other for entertainment to a large extent.

In the days before mass media and public libraries sources for individual entertainment were scarce.

We didn't have any radio; we didn't have any TV; we had no daily paper. We took a weekly paper, and most of our reading materials were books that were loaned to us by the neighbors or when we had the opportunity to buy books (from) a private library. Most of our reading materials consisted of the Bible or Sunday School Quarterly. Then they always used to have Sunday School papers we called them. They were a four page leaflet that was handed out. Those were read to us (Frances Orr).

The only books that we had in our home when I was twelve years old was a dictionary, a Bible, Mom's school geography, and Daddy's feed book. We didn't buy magazines when we went to town. Everything was pretty precious (Marjorie Harris).

The Bible, the dictionary, everybody had those. Oh, we had a few magazines that we passed around over the neighborhood or something. Money was pretty scarce. The weekly paper from the local town was about it. Later the Capper's Weekly, it's been out a long time. That was Arthur Capper out at Topeka, Kansas (Shorty Harris).

One way to overcome the financial reasons for lack of reading material was through bartering.

As early as 1939, the summer of 1939, the year after we were married, I only had 12 hens and they were to lay eggs for our table, Shorty's mother gave me. A one-armed salesman came (from) Trimble. He came and talked me out of two of those old hens, which just left

me ten. That's two eggs a day short. I was eighteen. I think I got a two or three year subscription to Ladies Home Journal which was, oh boy, was that a treat. I really couldn't afford it, but the one-armed guy convinced me that I could for the two old hens. Two hens for two years' subscription (Marjorie Harris).

For individual as well as group recreation the woodlands within the project area offered many opportunities.

We really didn't go very much, but occasionally we would go to a show, maybe we would go to Plattsburg, and maybe we would go to Smithville, but mostly we stayed home. When our children was little, our Sundays was our days together; and we took our children a lot of times and went to the woods and rambled through the trees and finding the different kinds of trees. Of course (my husband) knew the big ones, and where he had found the coons when he was a boy and these things. Our children all three of them learned to love nature. Our youngest girl was not too strong; and very often, she would end up on her daddy's shoulders before we got home, but anyway, they enjoyed it so much. At Easter time we would take them out to the woods and have a picnic. If it was too bad that we didn't want to go very far, we would go back down behind our house in the woods. There was an old stove down there, and he would build a fire in it, and they could boil some eggs. I would have something like potato salad and sandwiches and things they could have, and they would have their hard boiled eggs. We really entertained ourselves more. The Trimble Wildlife Area, we were just a mile north of that, and we spent many evenings down there watching the geese and the wild birds. We were just quite fond of the wildlife and the birds and nature and the flowers. On our place, Clyde and I, as long as we could, we would go to the woods each year and bring back some specimen of wild flower. We had quite a wild flower garden. We had many, many lovely shrubs and trees and things that we put out, and you could see that we really enjoyed our trees that we have back of our house. We had a little creek that ran back through that, back behind our house, and we owned the land just beyond over it (Evalyn Taylor).

The quest for mushrooms was also an attraction of the woods.

I don't know how old I was when they allowed me to go off into the timber and mess around, but I couldn't have been very old, about eight or nine years old. I spent a lot of time up and down the timber playing, shooting squirrels, groundhogs. I have been up and down those old hollows over there at home all of my life. I can't remember any year, since I was big enough to get out and hunt mushrooms, that I haven't had all the mushrooms we could eat at least two or three times, all the morells. We had an area there back in the timber, and we still go

there and still find a lot of mushrooms; but they aren't as plentiful up in that area as they use to be. I might tell you where I caught my catfish, and I might tell you where you can find a nest of squirrels, but I'll not tell you where my mushroom patch is. Everybody is the same way. There won't anyone tell you where they find their sack of mushrooms. Occasionally, we use to find a red mushroom, I think they call them 'beef heart'; but you found it around oak trees. Sometimes they were, oh, they would weigh a pound or two. They were great big things. My mother use to slice them, a quarter of an inch thick or less, and fry them. They were just as good as the morrell, but you didn't find too many of them. When you did find them, they were probably pretty good size and maybe eight to ten in a place, but not too often. It was on different years that you found them, you didn't find them on a regular basis (Buster Summers).

Hunting for profit was mentioned in the section on poultry houses; however, many people enjoyed hunting as a pleasurable pastime with no thought of selling their kill.

I used to hunt lots of rabbits. At that time there wasn't much quail or any deer. There was a few foxes but not many and not many coyotes, but rabbits, there was plenty of them. We hunt rabbits, oh, I got as high as a dozen rabbits at one hunting. I just used the dogs, we didn't take no guns. A lot of times the dogs would catch them, or we'd run them in a hollow tree and cut into a hollow and get the rabbits, something like that. We'd have all the rabbits, take them home, and dress them, dress them out; and if there was snow why we'd just pitch them up on the roof in the snow and let them freeze. Whenever we wanted a rabbit we'd have him handy. They were good, too, when they'd freeze that way. I never did do it, but a lot of fellows hunted them and sold them. You could get ten or fifteen cents. I never did hunt them for selling purposes. We always hunted them to eat (Virgil Bainbridge).

Changes in the rabbit population have decreased the popularity of rabbit hunting.

When I was a boy in this area the woods were full of rabbits, rabbits galore. You could take a 22 rifle and take your time, walk slow and look, look, look, and you wouldn't have any problem at all to get 'em in an afternoon setting with a 22. But the most fun was when you took your collie dog and your shot gun, let that collie dog run them, and you shoot the dudes up, and that was a lot of fun. In the early 30's we had rabbit fever in the rabbits, and they died. The rabbit population never come back in this area. I would say that you could get

out here on this farm we had, my dad had 480 acres up there when he died, and you could get out here on this farm and walk all day, and I don't think you would kill two rabbits in a day. They are just not here anymore (Buster Summers).

Claud Porter remembered one particularly successful day of duck hunting.

I used to hunt ducks, you know. I had tried to slip up on ducks on that river, I'd see them light, you know; and I tried my darndest to slip up on them and I never could slip up on them, only this one morning. Right due north of that Miller Bridge is bend in the river, a big hole of water there in that bend. Well I was at the barn, close to the house there doing chores that morning pretty early, and I seen all this big bunch of ducks circling, and I watched them. They went down over on the river, that would be southeast of the house, and I thought I knew right where they went down. So I had a Winchester Model 12 pump shot gun, and I just had seven shells. I could put seven shells in that gun. . . one in the barrel and six in the magazine. Well after breakfast, I had a feed lot down about half a quarter or so from the barn. I went down and done my chores down there and crossed over the hill to the river, you know. I slipped up to where I thought these ducks had went down, and they wasn't there. Well, it got cold enough that night to freeze just a real thin skim of ice. On down the river east of me, right in this bend, the sun was shining bright. Every once in awhile I could see something, you know, flash; and I thought to myself, 'well is that them ducks splashing that water, or is that the sun reflection off that ice?' That ice was breaking, maybe a cake of it floating. I kept watching and watching, and I couldn't tell if it was ducks or not. Finally I thought to myself, 'well, there's just one way to find out, and that's to go back out in this field and slip in there and crawl in there.' There was a great big maple tree stood up on the bank, and I walked quite a way across that field, and then I got down and crawled. I crawled right in behind this maple tree, and those ducks were tired. I guess they had been flying quite awhile, and they was right back in against the bank right next to me. I couldn't hear or see a blooming thing. I sat there quite a little while. Directly, I seen one old green headed mallard swim out in the middle of the river. Of course, I knew they was there then. I thought, 'well, I'm not going to shoot just that one duck. I'm going to wait, there will be two or three maybe to swim out there.' Directly, there was two just rolled right out in the middle of the river right together, I let them two have it. Of course I knew I killed them, and it addled (the ducks). They didn't know where that shot came from, and they went in



Figure 12.
Hunters Displaying Day's Bag of Quail. Courtesy
Smithville Historical Society.

every direction. Some of them was going straight up, some of them was going that away, some of them that away. I stood right there and emptied that gun just as fast as I could pump it. I picked up eight ducks. I told that down here in town, this boy laughed and he thought that was something. I got a duck every time I shot. I wasn't amissin. There was enough current, and there was a riffle just below this hole of water. They floated to that riffle and I got a dead limb to bring them in. There was neighbor who lived right across the river from me. He was down there on the river to gather corn while I was doing that shooting, and here he come over where I was at, and he said, 'what in the devil are you shooting at?' I told him, and he says, 'who's with you?' I said, 'no one.' 'Well,' he says, 'my God, what kind of a gun do you got?' I says, 'just a Winchester pump gun.' He thought that was somthing (Claud Porter).

Saturday trips to town fulfilled business and social functions. Farm people not only traded or purchased their week's worth of groceries but also enjoyed the chance for conversation.

You talked. You visited with the people. Well thirty years ago we would to Morton's Store in Smithville on a Saturday night and buy the groceries and visit (Marjorie Harris).

I can just remember the crowds and throngs of people that would come into (Smithville) on Saturday and Saturday nights, clear into 1951 (Charlie Taylor).

Saturday was always our big day (at Morton's Store), because everyone came in town on Saturday for their week's supply (Lucille Taylor).

I remember coming to town with my mother and dad with a team and wagon, you know; and when we bought our groceries, the grocerman always give the children a sack of candy (Willard Payton).

We'd go to Smithville mostly. Mostly we looked forward on a Saturday afternoon. That was a big day (Virgil Bainbridge).

Besides the stores and opportunities for visiting, the towns also had other attractions.

They had a picture show there and an opera house. Jake Douglas opened an opera house. There would always be a big crowd at Paradise on Saturday, Saturday evening. We played around like kids do. If you had a nickle you bought an ice cream cone, if you didn't have a nickle you went home without it (Eugene Arthur).

The movie theatre was an especially popular place to go on Saturday night. Movies were shown at both Smithville and Paradise.

We'd go to town and visit with people on the streets; and then the merchants down there, for the smaller kids, the merchants would put on a free movie; and we'd go to them free movies. The machine them days, the first movies we went to, they'd turn the machine with a crank. They had some kind of, I don't know, carbide light instead of electricity, and they turned the machine by cranks (Virgil Bainbridge).

We went to Paradise to the show. I don't know how else to tell you it run, but it was the reels; and they would show the movie. They were silent pictures on the screen, and then you had to rig them yourself. About half way through, they would have to stop and rewind the reel. So while they were doing that, some lady or someone would play the piano and have a few musical numbers in intermission time (Alta Martin).

They had the silent movies. I remember the first man that bought a ticket was Mack Root from the opera house when it opened, and I wasn't very far behind him (Eugene Arthur).

Robin Lewis recalled his job as projectionist.

They needed somebody down at the theatre to run the projectors, I started there back when they still had the silent movies. I might have been fifteen. Back when they had the silent, had an old record machine, dual records, control switch from one record to another. At that time we had sound effect records to go along with those movies, we had a cue sheet to go along with it. We didn't have no talking or anything like that. We would follow the cue sheet, like when they were having a battle in the army or something like that or airplanes flying or trains whistling. When it called for sounds at a certain time, well you started your record and in a certain part of the picture it would tell you where to start those records. The first sound equipment that we had was a record rather than being on the film, the sound was on a record. It was a record machine that was geared up to the projector, set right along side of it. The film reels at that time was 1,000 foot length. You would have to start your projector and the disc at the right point, which was a big deal at that time, (if) some operator made a mistake, by golly, and tore up a lot of film, spliced in some extra, or left some out, you had to figure out which way to go. If you see he had ended something, you would have to grab that disc and give it a spin and catch up with it or you would have to hold the sucker, by golly, until the film caught up.

It was a problem back then. I still got the old projectors down home, the old Edison machines. It was in the theatre up here at Paradise, and I used to run that when I would have to get up on a box in order to look out the window to turn the crank. Back then we didn't have shows every night, nobody had that kind of money. Down here (at Smithville), we had shows on Friday, Saturday, and Monday; and we probably got to having them on Sunday. Now the little town of Paradise, they just had them on Saturday night, that was a big thing. The garage was downstairs. My uncle had the theatre, and there was very few places that had compressed air for filling up tires in them days. They had an air compressor in there, and he took them out and run a pipe and put a steam whistle up there and run a wire down to the valve. About fifteen minutes before show time, he would pull that whistle. That was when the horses would get skittish, they would hear that whistle and down they would go. We had a different show each week, played it every Saturday night; one show a week. I still have some of the slides of some of the old shows, some of them dating back to World War I.

Other forms of entertainment were also available in town. Morton's Store in Smithville sponsored certain events. Well, Buster Brown show, Mr. Morton used to have it at the Mercantile House. (He) used to have Buster Brown come over and put on a show. I don't remember too much about the show. Buster Brown would come with his dog Tige. He put on a regular show. They built a stage outside here, he had a truck or something (Lucile Wright).

Buster Brown came to town, . . . and gave us little pop-it things, you know, cricket-like that makes a noise. (He) put on a program which was interesting. We didn't go to shows or anything. There wasn't such things up until later life if there was. (Buster Brown) came, I would say, in 1903, that's a pretty good guess. He was an old man but dressed like a little boy, you know, with the Buster Brown shoes, that was an advertisement (Nannie Payton).

The current fashions were also displayed at the Morton Store.

Mr. Morton used to have a style show every year, and that would bring a lot of people to town. He had that inside the store. I know we used to laugh because Mrs. Morton always fed (the models). Some of them would eat so much, she always was a good cook. She'd feed them, and one of the girls sometimes used to laugh and get up and walk around the table so (she) could eat some more (Lucile Wright).

Each town also had annual events which drew crowds from around the entire area.

We used to have a circus come to town, maybe once a year, something like that. This was a little bit later, after Paradise grew up. We used to have big meetings at night, tent meetings. (The circus came) usually in the fall. They got on a lot across the street from the stores, west of the stores on the south side there, which is now Halferty's Machine place. I don't remember too much about it except they had elephants (Benton Summers).

Independence Day was celebrated every year with a large festival at Mecca.

They had fire crackers, and they would shoot fire crackers (on) the Fourth of July, have a kind of dinner there, ice cream, cake and all that stuff. Then they would play ball. They used to be a bunch of us there (Roy Bailey).

They used to have a big time at the Fourth of July in Mecca, ice cream and everything. They'd shoot fire crackers, have a lot of fun. They would be a big crowd in Mecca around the Fourth of July. Back in those days there wasn't too many cars, horseback and buggies and walkers, that was the way they would get around. (There would be) I expect 500 or 600 people more or less (Ora May).

About the only time we went to Mecca, they used to always have a big Fourth of July celebration. I don't remember too much about this except we went there for the Fourth and they had fire works. They started out with a picnic. It was a picnic, and with the picnic they would have like sack races and ball games and that sort of thing. When it became dusk, they had fire works. Where they got the fire works, or where they got the money for them, I don't know (Frances Orr).

Fourth of July in Mecca was an ice cream supper and a big fair and program. It was just known as a big celebration (Alta Martin).

We always played ball in the afternoon, and then they had the ice cream supper and the fire works that night, entertainment. The road didn't go through where it goes now. It went on the north side of Clyde Dale's house, so that was all a pasture. They would wheel a piano or organ, generally an organ, down on that hillside for music. My wife's folks lived on the hill there, and then they would have singing and entertainment and fireworks (Hugh Martin).

Neighbors drove together for several miles to attend the celebration.

(One) thing that highlighted Mecca was the Fourth of July celebration. They had an ice cream social, and I

can remember as a very young girl going to it in a big wagon with our family and maybe another family that was going with us. We'd all get in there. Maybe Dad would have some hay in the wagon, and we put a comforter over the hay, and we would all have a place to sit. Of course, Dad and whoever sat with him would be on the spring seat of the wagon to drive the horses (the three miles to) get there. Sometimes the people that lived up on the hill would bring their organ out, and they would have music out there and have fire works and then there would be the ice cream social. The ladies at the Stoney Point Church would always put that on, and the ice cream would come down on the train from Cameron. The ladies would bake the cakes and sell the ice cream. They'd come for miles and miles around. It was quite an event. Some of them would even come on the train (Evalyn Taylor).

Clyde Taylor remembered an accident which made the Fourth of July of 1926 especially exciting.

Bert Shannon always run the store there, and he always sold fire works. He couldn't sell it too good in the store, so he put some in a wheelbarrow and took it to the ice cream stand. Somebody shot a Roman candle in them, and they had fire works all galore in one shot. We was sawing lumber out here in the woods, and we got down there just before the fire works. We real'y had fire works, I'll tell you. There was an old man that got down behind the old organ to get out of the range of the fire works, and one of the Roman candles was headed his direction and got him.

Smithville, the largest town in the project area, had numerous seasonal events.

They did have, in the summer time several times, they did have garden shows. They would have different kinds of concessions and exhibits and things and garden competition, flower competitions, and things like that. Then the Kiwanis they usually would put on a summer program, money making project of some kind. It was in the 1940's or 50's maybe. It might have been the first one they put on, and it was more like the history of the town that they put on (Lucille Taylor).

In recent years Smithville has had an annual activity known as the "Festival Days". Lucille Taylor explained the history of the event.

It really started out after we got our museum, and we had a big celebration. We called it Progressarama. It was two or three days, and we did it to raise money to restore the house. All the organizations, not just the organizations in town but the extension clubs out in the country, all went in and gave us all the money they made; and we put it on the house to have the work done. More or

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In recent years Smithville has had an annual activity known as the "Festival Days". Lucille Taylor explained the history of the event.

It really started out after we got our museum, and we had a big celebration. We called it Progressarama. It was two or three days, and we did it to raise money to restore the house. All the organizations, not just the organizations in town but the extension clubs out in the country, all went in and gave us all the money they made; and we put it on the house to have the work done. More or

less the days we have now, one day or two days which ever it ends up being, has more or less stemmed from that one celebration. We had a parade, and we had some street dancing and just a little bit of everything. The historical society started it, and we asked each organization to send however many members they wanted to a meeting to get it going, and out of that they elected a general chairman. It ended up that it was also our centennial year (1967), and so from that each organization decided what they wanted to do. Some of our biggest workers were people out in the country that didn't belong to an organization. They built the old well and put it up in the center of the street, like it was originally built, and just went back to a lot of things they did back then. We had our Sunday afternoon United Services. The historical society had a country store, and it seems like more or less what we do now is a take-off from that. They had games, teen dances for the kids, and square dances. I am sure there was a cute baby contest, and there was a queen contest. That was when we had the opening of our museum, too (Lucille Taylor).

Making money for the museum was the primary purpose of the festival, and a large amount of joint effort went into the museum itself.

The woman that owned it (was) the daughter of the people that built it, who had rented Patterson Mill. Of course after it went through the flood, it was in real bad shape; and it had been rented out as two apartments for several years. So it had begun to get pretty run down. She knew that they didn't want to restore it, New Orleans was where they lived; and she knew that more than likely the Urban Renewal would eliminate it. So she gave it to the city for use as a museum, and that is how we got it. It would have been torn down, I am sure, because we had to do an awful lot of work. So many people worked on it. We started working on it right after the first of the year in 1967. She gave it to us in October of 1966. We didn't get to do too much to it until we got all the junk off it and things like that. In the spring, it was still cold weather, we started stripping the woodwork. We stripped all the downstairs woodwork and refinished it and had to have new ceilings put in, and we had quite a bit of work we had to do. So many people went in and worked, and a lot of the contractors that couldn't work at that time of year, of course they weren't too busy, would donate two or three days of their time and help. We didn't keep track of the hours, but there was thousands of hours donated on it. There were three or four of us that worked four or five months darn near every day an hour or two (Lucille Taylor).

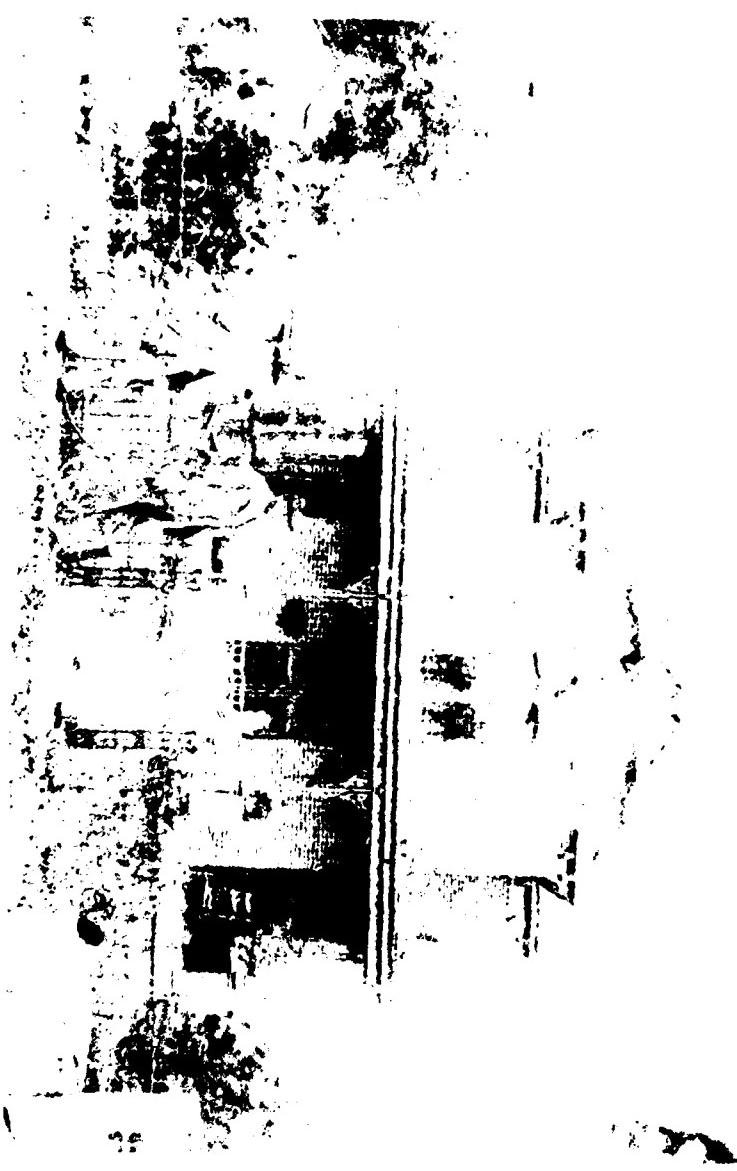


Figure 13.
Patterson House During Residence of Patterson
Family. Now Patterson Museum at Smithville.
Courtesy Smithville Historical Society.

Paradise had some famous entertainers from traveling shows perform during the off season.

A theatre group used to come out here and usually spent several weeks during the winter there working up their vaudeville act at the old theatre. There was quite a bunch of those that went to Hollywood, as I remember. I'd say that was about 1915, 1916, 1917, along about in there. I was just a small kid (Robin Lewis).

One vaudeville star, Buster Keaton, was actually a resident of Smithville. Robin Lewis described one unusual performance.

Buster Keaton never laughed, the frozen faced comedian. But he did laugh one time down here on stage. Buster's dad was with them, they was a show crew that came through. Of course Buster was part of the crew that I happened to know, too. I didn't see this, but I was told that in this act that they was putting on, he was supposed to get mad at Buster and hit him with a board and was supposed to hurt him real serious. They said Buster took and got a balloon, blowed it up, and put it up under his coat so the old man didn't see it. When he hit him, by golly, the thing exploded like a cannon, so it like to scared the old man to death. (They) said Buster just laid down and rolled. I would have liked to have seen that.

Dances were popular diversions for people of all ages. Public places as well as private homes were the sites of dances.

There used to be an opera house here (in Smithville), right over here where Pat's is located now. They had square dances there up above on the second storey. Well, you only got in to the dance hall on invitation. You had to have an invitation, and they had a guard down at the lower door and one up inside. They sent you the invitation. Oh, I've danced a many a square dance there. They run about six or eight sets at a time. Themdays they didn't call 'em bands. They had a fiddle, a banjo and a guitar. It was good music (Willard Payton).

One of the local "ball rooms" attracted dancers from the larger cities.

(Jim Ride) had a place built over on the railroad tracks to unload passengers, and they would have dances in the barn. He had his barn fixed up, had the seats around the loft, up in the hay loft, had it all cleaned up for a dance floor. They used to go over when the train would come through and people would come out from Kansas City, and St. Joe too, I suppose, and different places around. Ride out on the train and stay all night to go to the dances and go back the next day (Shorty Harris).

Parkville drugstores served as places for teenage dancers.

They had a lot of square dances. I never did go to the square dances. I never did like to square dance. They had a lot of square dances, and the two drug stores in town had a balcony, and that was about the kids' hangout after school and weekends. They had juke boxes, and we danced there; and that was all we did if we didn't go to the show someplace. They had a theatre here, too, on weekends. We spent a lot of time at the drugstore dancing (to the juke box), or they had a piano. Some of them that had a piano would come in and play pieces, mostly music that was in the juke box. How the druggist put up with us, I don't know. The kids then were different than they are now. They wouldn't put up with the drugs and things that they would have to cope with now (Lucille Taylor).

Groups of friends also gathered for dances in each other's homes.

Saturday night somebody would give a dance at the house, clean out one room and dance. (I) went to Parkville to dances. (They played the) fiddle and guitar, sometimes piano if they had one. Dance all night to the fiddle and guitar, square dance, round dance, and all these other kind of dances come out after that (Roy Bailey).

They had dances usually on Saturday nights, every Friday night or Saturday night in the neighborhood; however, they didn't have too many in the community I lived in. Later when I got big enough to run around, we'd go to dances in different places (Shorty Harris).

We never was allowed to go to a dance. We could go to parties, but we wasn't allowed to go to a dance. Of course, me and my brother older than me, we'd slip off once in a while and maybe go to one, but better not let my mother find it out. She'd punish us some way or the other. Never was anything spectacular happened, we'd just go and watch them dance. It was pretty amusing to watch the square dances, the old fiddler, the fellow calling. They were held at people's homes (Claud Porter).

Local homes were also the scene of parties where neighbors and friends got together for activities other than dancing.

We used to go to people's houses that give parties. We would play games, different kinds of games, Post Office and Upset the Fruit Basket and things like that. Then, of course, they would serve eats. We'd stay maybe until 10:00, 11:00 and then come home. Generally went with a team and sled to the party, maybe a couple of families or so (to the sled) (Virgil Bainbridge).

The neighbors would get together then, too; and we played pinochle with neighbors, and we played pitch some (Evalyn Taylor).

I didn't go to parties. My mother more often entertained. She liked her family and children to be at home. When I was in grade school she entertained the teacher, had several of the girls and boys in our home, and they stayed all night. She had made a molasses candy, that's the cheap kind, and had a game of it. Had this candy and divided it up in small sticks to one side of the group and the other group the same. Then they hide it and chased to see who could get the most in a given time (Nannie Payton).

(We had) school parties, a bunch of kids get together and maybe pop corn or make candy. (We made) molasses candy, sometimes. . . divinity, white candy made out of sugar (Claud Porter).

Celebrations for special events, such as weddings, were also held in the homes. Nannie Payton described the wedding showers held in her honor.

Soon after we were married, . . . neighbors wanted to have a shower and chivaree. At the chivaree they beat on a circular saw with hammers which made an awful noise. It was put onto a pole, and a man carried each end of the pole, and then you struck that with a hammer, and it made an awful noise. They would shoot shot guns, scream and holler; and the thing was to get the bride and groom out of the house, and maybe they'd ride the husband on the pole. They didn't do that, (they were) very nice to both of us. Then they came in; and my mother, she was always a good host, had refreshments and everything for everybody. I think it was cake and maybe some ice cream or fruit salad. Then they had gifts for us, and one of them was a large rocker. Then others brought gifts, and then we just had a nice sociable time, and they went home. Now my husband lived in Platte County, and his friends came, and he lived in a little different atmosphere. We square danced in Clay County in my neighborhood, and they had play parties, and I had never seen one. Well the group came to his home, and his mother was prepared. She served . . . a dessert of fresh fruit, peaches--would have to be canned peaches in December--and oranges and bananas, coconut on top of it in a sherbert or a sauce dish as we call them. She made her own homemade white cake. Well these young people they just got out and they was going to this play (Skip to My Lou), and it was called a play party because they objected to square dancing. Now square dancing was often times confused with drinking of whiskey and drunkenness, and I think that was their objection. We never had it, because I didn't attend those kind of square dances. Oh, you'd have it somewhere on the sideline, but it didn't affect us. (At) this play party, several could play. You didn't have just a set of four, eight people. You just had a whole circle. They said dos-a-dos, and you'd just go

around all the different ones and sing Skip to My Lou, Skip to My Lou My Darling. Something about if you love her, pat her on the head, a little tune, you know. I was thrilled, at that time I was only sixteen, so I was playing. So we had a nice evening of that. The only disappointment I had, they brought inexpensive gifts which I was proud of, but they didn't put their names on them. Later in life I was so disappointed that I couldn't connect that gift with some of those women that brought them. They brought many things and with what my folks gave me, we was just pretty set up (Nannie Payton).

Holidays were observed with parties for the students which were held at the school.

There was always a Halloween party, and a Christmas program. (At Halloween) everybody masked, and you had to guess who the others were. We would have refreshments, and then at the Christmas party, we drew names and exchanged gifts, and had little speeches and songs about Christmas (Frances Orr).

Halloween was also a time when young people derived entertainment for themselves playing tricks on their neighbors.

I can remember Halloween. Always lots of wire and so on in back of the hardware store, and somebody always found it advantageous to get that piled out in the middle of the road and block the road (Benton Summers).

I remember one Halloween night, there were quite a bunch of girls got out together. We weren't doing anything bad. If you had a rake out or a chair or something we would move it to the next door neighbor's porch or something. One gentleman, we took his front gate. I didn't, but one or two of the other girls (did). (They) started off down the street, we were just going to move it a little ways, and here he came after us. I can see him yet with his coat tail flying, and we finally got the girls' attention. Everybody ran different directions; but anyway, we finally got their attention, and they dropped the gate and he never did catch us (Irene Breckenridge).

Certain hazards existed for the pranksters, as exemplified by Robin Lewis' experience.

I can remember pushing Uncle Bob's outhouse over one time when he was waiting for us inside with a shotgun. We pushed it over in a different direction, by golly, we pushed it over on the door. He stuck that old shotgun out the hole, and that is when I heard buckshot twice, when it passed me and when I passed it. Oh that old man was unhappy.

People acquired nicknames in honor of their participation in Halloween tricks. Claud "Soap" Porter is a case-in-point.

That durn Charles Ray and Mac, Charles Ray is a little older than Mac, but they was near enough of the same age. Them boys would go down north of their house on a gravel road and throw rocks over on (an older couple's) house on the tin roof. You know how that would sound. Boy, they would come out of there just like a couple of little black bumblebees and take out after them boys. The boys, of course, would run; and they couldn't catch them. So one Halloween night, I was setting in the store talking to Hersh there, and they drove up out in front and sent a boy--he was red headed by the name of Bob Ward--in the store there to get a cake of soap. Well Hersh wouldn't sell him the soap. So I sneaked up the aisle aways and told him, I said, 'You boys going to soap Al and Norrie's windows. I'll get you a cake of soap and pay for it.' He said, 'Okay, get 'er.' Well several boys were sitting out front in the car. I got him a cake of soap and give it to him, and I went out to the car and had my head stuck in the window, you know, telling the boys what they was supposed to do with it. This fellow that they had been throwing rocks on his house walked right up behind me. Mac, my boy, was in the car and he said, 'Dad, shut your mouth. There he stands right behind you.' Well, I shut up. He says to me, 'say, Claud', he says, 'do you know the dirty so-and-so's that's been throwing rocks on my house?' I said, 'Oh, no, Al, I don't know who's been throwing rocks on your house.' 'Well', he says, 'I'll know them the next time I se them.' That's where I got the name of 'Soap'.

The role of the school in the social scene is described in the chapter on schools. Other organizations were also responsible for filling the needs for fellowship.

There was always 4H clubs that would have their own activities. They usually had 4H clubs and scouts. There wasn't any Girl Scouts when I was growing up here, there was Boy Scouts, though (Lucille Taylor).

Several fraternal organizations were once active in the area.

They had an Odd Fellow's Lodge (at Paradise). At one time they had a Woodman's Lodge. My father-in-law belonged to both of them. Of course I grew up in the Odd Fellow and joined when I was about twenty-five and still belong. We had a pretty big hall. I can't tell much of the activities. I can remember when all the chairs were practically full all the way around the room. We had a big attendance, big membership. We used to have a competition putting on the degrees among the lodges over the county. With all of the degrees

that we put on, we won first place. You had four degrees in the Odd Fellow's Lodge. First is initiatory, the first one is friendship, the second was love, the third degree was truth. We exemplified those inner degrees, beautiful. Then I had an older brother that could give an old Grant's Charge in all four degrees. We used to meet once a week. Now, we just meet twice a year. (We) had a Rebecca Lodge, auxiliary of the Odd Fellow's, female, and it was a strong lodge for quite awhile (Eugene Arthur).

Back in them days they had Masons and Sir Knights, and most of them belonged to them (Roy Bailey).

Sports were very popular in the area and several groups were formed into ball teams. Games between the various town teams were enjoyed by all the people in the project area.

Even when I was in grade school, one of the things the young fellows did was play baseball in the summer time. We played a lot of baseball down at what we called 'Millers' (which was) about two and a half or three miles south and west of Paradise, Smithville. The reason we went down there is that he had a flat place there by the side of the creek that made a good ball diamond. So we played a lot of ball down there (Benton Summers).

When I was big enough to run around, about eight to ten years old, they used to play ball there in the summer time down there to Mecca. They had a ball team there. After all the boys left, after the First World War, why that broke the ball team up. I would go to all of them on Saturday's and Sunday's. It was lots of fun. You would go down there and play with a bunch of other kids, and we would sit there and look at the ball game, and we started playing ourselves, just lots of fun back in them days. The soda pop stand was run right there, and he would open up the store--there was two stores there then--and they would open up the store, and we would get soda pop there on Sundays same as you could any other day (Roy Bailey).

That was a big thing, and in the town of Smithville, we always had a baseball team that played on Sunday. The town team they called it, and that was a lot of fun. We would go watch that, and I played with the town team at Smithville for four or five years before I was married (Buster Summers).

Hugh Martin managed the Mecca team and remembered activities of the ball teams during his tenure of "three or four" years.

We just got our boys together that wanted to play, and I was just manager. We had a team in Mecca, and they would have one which they called 'Al Creek', which was on another fork of the lake which will be coming around by Harley. Then they had another one in Trimble

and Smithville, and one out here in what they called Red Brush. I didn't go to Edgerton any. They had a ball team, too, but I didn't go to that. We'd just play each other on different Sunday's. Wet weather or something when you couldn't work in the field, we practiced and played. We had some good players and we had some bad ones. We would just call them up and make arrangements to play with them one Sunday, or they would call another team up for another Sunday and maybe come back the following Sunday and play with us. We would play each other maybe three or four times during the summer. Plattsburg had a pretty good ball team. They hired a pitcher and catcher, and Gower was the same way. Of course they fought all the time. You would go to the chautauqua, and that was where they had their big games, Plattsburg and Gower. They played for blood. We didn't have any money to hire (players) Sometimes we would have thirty, forty (observers), sometimes we wouldn't have hardly any. It'd all depend on what day it was. We had a preacher down there that was assistant prosecuting attorney at Jackson County, and he would come out there to preach at church on Sunday morning, and then he would umpire a ball game on Sunday evening and played with us. The kids all liked him because he would go for sports, too. I had men on my team close to forty years old, and I wasn't but twenty.

Basketball was introduced at school along with other team sports.

When I got into high school (at Smithville), I had never seen a game of basketball. The year I was staying down there, the first year, I would go watch them play, and they played over Boyd's Department Store. It had four posts in it to hold the roof up, and we played around those four posts which were the goals at each end. When I was still going to high school, I played basketball. I didn't do much in track. I did try to play a little football, but I only weighed about 130 pounds at that time, and I was pretty small, so I didn't get much into football (Benton Summers).

Females were also included in athletic programs.

We played volleyball. We had a volleyball court out there, and afterward I played tennis when I was in high school (at Plattsburg). I know we had a volleyball court there at the grade school building. We didn't have teams for tennis then, we just had a tennis association and played tennis before and after school (Irene Breckenridge).

Like schools, churches played a dual role in the community. Besides the spiritual aspects of the religious organizations, churches also sponsored social gatherings.

The format of church services differed according to the philosophy of each particular religion.

I went (to the Pleasant Hill Primitive Baptist Church at Trimble) from the time I was a little bitty girl. The women sat on the north side of the church and the men sat on the south side. It was heated in the winter with wood stoves that took great big logs. The minister didn't live around here. One came from Richmond, and different towns that belonged to this organization of the Primitive Baptist Churches. A little neighbor girl and I would sit together and we would get to giggling once in awhile and my mom would kind of stop us you know. They had good preaching. Our older son used to always say, 'Well if you want to hear a good sermon, you had to go down to the old Baptist Church and hear it.' They took a text and preached from the Bible. They didn't really take up any collections as such. People would make gifts to the minister. They didn't make much to do of it. They really didn't have a church board either, as such, but there was always somebody that looked after the church building. It wouldn't be a very big group. It was maybe twenty-five. There was no music in the church, they still don't (have it). They did not believe in foreign missions. When I remember it (singing), my daddy had a tuning fork and would kind of hit that and start a song and everybody would come in with it. It really sounded pretty good. They had funerals there. They didn't have any womens' organizations, no extras at all. They don't believe in that (Irene Breckenridge).

The Methodist form of worship contrasted to that of the Baptists.

. . . but there were Methodists, and I'm not discriminating or speaking rudely about them, but they shout. When they become enthused at some scripture, they shout out during the services. And one man, a Mr. Hulls, he was a very religious man, and he was leaning over the seat in front of him and praying and then he would get up and shout and then he'd lean over and pray. His daughter's boy friend threw his overshoes at this old man during the service. Down at Smithville, the Methodists had their church in a part of the Cox Hotel. There were large posts that suspended the room above, supported it. And that's where they had their church service for years and years. Well when they got what they called 'happy' and shout, some would climb or attempt to climb those posts during the service. Now we were of the Christian denomination and we weren't showing off our feelings as much. I don't think they lack faith but they showed it in a different way (Nannie Payton).

Besides Sunday services, a major religious activity involved initiation into the congregation. Baptisms were performed in the local waters.

Baptismal services for the church were held either at a farm pond or at Smith Fork Creek that went through there, the one they are damming now. It was right where the museum in Smithville is now, the Patterson Museum. They had baptismal services in Smithville on the river. At Paradise they had it in what we called the Stewart Pond. Those would be held in the summer time when it was warm. It was just a thing that everyone in the community that attended church would gather there and the minister would baptise the candidates. They would sing, of course there was no musical instruments, but they would sing. In Smithville they would have "Shall We Gather At The River". I don't remember what they would sing when they would have it at the pond at Paradise. As a young child those things are impressive (Frances Orr).

I was baptized below the dam, what we call the Patterson Mill Dam in Smithville, below it, . . . where the water would run over and make a pool. And you went down from what is the Patterson Museum, that yard to the south and there was that. Quite a group of the church people would stand at the side and sing appropriate songs and the minister would say things and you were baptized really in the water and you had no protection, only your ordinary clothing. I felt, and many others, that you weren't baptized as you should without running (water), not a pond would do, it had to be running. Sometimes they would chop the ice to be baptized. But I guess as far as that I faired better. It was a season where the water wasn't cold (Nannie Payton).

Annual revival meetings were also held under the auspices of the local churches.

They (the revivals) usually came (to Paradise) in the fall. I don't remember any of the preachers they had, but they would come in there and set up a tent and be there maybe a week, two weeks at the most. They were all denominations that partook. It was pretty well attended. There was a lot of singing. A little different than the Billy Graham thing now, probably a start of the Billy Graham thing. There would be a man and his wife, I remember a family one time come in here to the name of Jones and this would have been back in the 1920's, and there was a man and his wife and they had three or four daughters that all played xylophone, one had a saxophone, somebody had a violin, and boy they got that audience stirred up. They stayed with Dr. Rue up here at Paradise, in the upstairs, and the boys used to go up there to try to catch those girls changing their clothes after preaching. They'd put on a show and get people all psyched up about this religion, it was an event that . . . was a social thing that people in the community used as an opportunity for them to get together (Benton Summers).



Figure 14.
Early Flood Control, Dam at Smithville.
Courtesy Link V. Evans.

Dinners and ice cream socials were also part of the church activities.

They would have an association meeting around the different churches in the fall. They used to meet on Saturday and Sunday both. On Saturday everybody took food and we ate at the church. In later years, they have met on Sunday nights or Saturday nights sometimes and then Sunday they would have the dinner. Everybody would bring food, like a buffet. They always had awfully good food, and I would always look for my mother's because she was an awfully good cook (Irene Breckenridge).

The churches would have ice cream suppers every summer. Church members would bring a cake in and they made home-made ice cream, freeze it there you know. They sold it so much a dish. I think it was usually around 20¢ a dish for cake and ice cream. We went to quite a few. There was three churches in Paradise and nearly all of them would have an ice cream supper during the good weather, and of course there is church at Trimble and they would have one. All the churches would have that to make a little money. If they would make \$25 in them days, you know, they thought it was a big deal when a lot people were working for 50¢ a day (Reuben Ross).

Over the years the life styles of the area have changed. New dimensions to home entertainment were created by the addition of televisions and radios to the average household. Greater accessibility to Kansas City provided a new source for entertainment and shopping. The project area towns which once bustled on Saturdays are now quiet.

If you would put all the people together that is in town all week now, you wouldn't have as many people that would be here on Saturday (in the past) (Robin Lewis).

As people have sought social life outside the area, familiarity with each other has been lost to some degree.

(At one time) if you would come by and asked me where a certain person lived in this town of Smithville, . . . I could have told you everybody's name and where they lived. But that time is long, long gone (Willard Payton).

THE CHAUTAUQUA

The chautauqua, which began at Lake Chautauqua, New York in 1847 as a religious supplement to the Sunday School, became a popular recreational and educational event for Mid-western towns in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although they retained the name "chautauqua", they were really traveling shows performed by lecturers and musicians for general entertainment.

The chautauqua was a major annual festivity in the area. August of 1906 saw the first of these events in Plattsburg.

The chautauqua originally started in a grove of trees just up the street here . . . on South Main. That was Birch's Grove (Irene Breckengridge).

Residents of the area looked forward to the yearly activities with eager anticipation.

It was the most wonderful time of the year. Most farm people that were interested in that sort of entertainment would try to arrange their work so that they could get off that week, . . . other than doing the chores that just had to be done, suspending all farming activities for chautauqua week (Don Breckenridge).

That was the highlight of the year actually, because we went before school started. We knew that we were going to be caged in after that (Irene Breckenridge).

Nearly everyone attended a few of the activities, but some enjoyed the entire program.

I considered myself lucky if I got to go one day. Some people would go and pitch a tent and stay the week out (Eugene Arthur).

There were some people in this area that used to go up there, and they had a tent, and that was their summer vacation. They would stay there the whole week. There was one gentleman who was crippled in his legs, and he had a wheel chair with levers on it. He pushed and pulled with each arm, and that is the way he propelled himself around all over that chautauqua grounds. I can remember him (Buster Summers).

Those who came for the day used various modes of transportation.

We would come up on the 10:00 train and stay all day and go back on the 4:30, unless Mother and Dad saw fit to come up for the evening program. If so, we stayed over then, and we would go back with Mother and Dad (Alta Martin).

Of course, you would take in a basket dinner, take your dinner along and have a basket dinner. It would be way in the night getting home, horse and buggy, if you please. It run up till after people had cars, too (Eugene Arthur).

We always stayed till the last thing was over, and then we came home. I can remember we had been up there a few times and it would rain and complicated the situation, getting home, considerably. We came around through what was 116 and down 169 through Trimble over here. That way we only had three mile of mud road, but everybody had chains and they put them on, and we always made it (Buster Summers).

"Tenting" was a popular form of living arrangement during chautauqua week.

They just had this big tent in the middle of the grounds, and then they just had individual tents around the outside. It was just like a camp ground (Frances Orr).

They had tents on both sides of the grounds that they rented out to different families and different groups. We girls had tents along in the ground. We would spend our days kind of in and out of the tent (Irene Breckenridge).

The canvas tents were rented from the Chautauqua Association.

They were all uniform, they were all the same size and the same key, fairly small, really. It was what I called an open room and two smaller rooms for sleeping on either side of the room that went through the middle of it (Don Breckenridge).

Families rented tents and young people often shared tents with their friends.

My mother and I had a tent, and we went up there and stayed during the whole (week). My father would drive back and forth in a horse and buggy or ride a horse, because he had chores to do (Frances Orr).

Several highschoolers could use a tent, but lack of space kept the occupancy to "five or six, no more than that" (Don Breckenridge). The facilities were somewhat limited.

We didn't have water or a bath or anything, and you had to go home and dress the next morning and clean up (Don Breckenridge).

The camp grounds were well regulated by the Chautauqua Association.

It wasn't everybody, by the way, that they would bring a tent to. Somebody that didn't have a very good reputation, or rough kind of a bunch, they didn't want their business. It was well patrolled, and there was no chance of anything going on. It had a high fence around the place, watchmen walking around, very well managed and patrolled. A good many families tented, and I can never recall there being any unpleasant situation or woes from anyone attending there. No one was ever robbed, nobody was ever molested, or as far as I ever recall hearing. It was very well managed (Don Breckenridge).

Frances Orr recalled the dining facilities on the grounds.

They had a big dining room there where you could get three meals a day and it was (in) a building. Then they also had a hamburger place that was a tent, and you could get hotdogs or hamburgers and pop, lemonade, and that sort at that place. Colored people prepared the meals and served them in the dining room. There was one man that always dressed real fancy, and he was the head waiter. He would bring a great big metal tray and a drumstick, like you use on a bass drum, out; and he would hit that big metal tray, and that was the signal that dinner was served, or breakfast, or whatever. His name was Bill Green.

Memories of the chautauqua evoke different images to different people. Everyone has a favorite remembrance.

Pretty girls. That was quite a thing (Eugene Arthur).

The thing I best remember about all the chautauquas was they had a great big old tank that must have held 1,000 gallon of water, and they kept that full of ice and ice water. My Lord, faucets, I don't know, there must have been twenty of them, and everybody had a cup. You could drink ice water till it would run out of your eyes. That was the only ice water I can remember having, just from one summer to the next at the Plattsburg Chautauqua (Buster Summers).

I tell you what I liked best. I was an only child and lived in the country; and during the school year, I had association with people my age; but in the summer I had very little. I looked forward to the Chautauqua to see people (Frances Orr).

I come up there just to run around with the gang and to eat popcorn and things like that. The lectures and things like that didn't amount to much to me. They had good speakers for the older people that wanted to listen (Hugh Martin).

The entertainment afforded by the chautauqua was varied including several types of activities.

It was sort of like any program at a fairground in that day and age. It was variety, speakers and so forth. We also enjoyed meeting our friends on the chautauqua grounds and eating ice cream cones and popcorn and visiting. It was just a good social time (Alta Martin).

They put up a big tent and built the stage, and they had entertainment that came in on the railroad--lecturers, bands, music--very much like our variety television shows (Frances Orr).

They had quite a good program through the day. They would have band music in the morning, and on Sundays they had church services there. I can remember La Follette was here one time and spoke, and men of prominence did. The last few years (we had) moving pictures. It usually came a storm on Saturday or Sunday night and maybe blow the tent down and wet us all down good, but they really did have good programs. They had play companies that came and put on plays. Once in awhile there would be some home talent, but usually there was companies that came in (Irene Breckenridge).

The chautauqua agenda usually included speeches by famous people of the day.

One thing that I remember that impressed me very much was the two times William Jennings Bryan spoke. William Jennings Bryan was a candidate for the Presidency on three different occasions. He was nominated twice on the Democratic ticket, and then sought the nomination another time and was defeated. He was a great orator, he was one of the greatest at that time. Then there was an old senator from Tennessee that spoke here at one time. Senator Bob La Follette of Wisconsin spoke here. They had some nationwide celebrities, speakers. In those days we didn't have the televisions, or radios, of course, and people didn't read as much as I hope they do now.

They appreciated hearing someone like that, that was considered very bright and intelligent and well informed. We used to have some real good musical groups. We always had a platform manager, usually a minister that acted as platform manager, and gave the sermon occasionally in the mornings when they didn't have another speaker available (Don Breckenridge).

Besides speakers, there were also musical acts included in the program.

They did have good music. They had a McNuts Band from St. Joe, and all kinds of music. They had some very good violinists here. I can remember one that could pretty near make it say words. I can't remember his name, but he was a real good violinist (Irene Breckenridge).

There was a lot of music. I always enjoyed the band and the musical programs. I think I enjoyed the musical part of it more than any (Alta Martin).

Yes, they had good bands. I liked that all right (Hugh Martin).

A later attraction came with the showing of motion pictures.

After all the stage shows were over, and the orchestra played, and the band played, and that type of thing, they always had a western, the old silent type (Buster Summers).

I remember seeing Charlie Chaplin's movie "The Kid". They had really good movies. The reels would break sometimes, and we would have to stop and wait on that (Irene Breckenridge).

When the Plattsburg grounds were no longer utilized, the show was held in Smithville around 1916 or 1917.

It was one of the biggest chautauqua circuits in the whole United States. Smithville later had one, and I went to it, but Plattsburg was far better than Smithville ever had (Hugh Martin).

Hugh Martin recalled earning spending money to attend the Smithville Chautauqua.

We would mow a row of fence weeds for Earl Breckenridge of a morning, and he would give us \$1.50. Then we would take his money and go to the chautauqua that afternoon. I guess I must have been 12 or 13 years old, maybe a little older.

After the event was discontinued in Plattsburg, the Chautauqua Association sold the grounds.

The Chautauqua Park is now the Plattsburg Chautauqua Housing Project (operated) by the Federal Government (Alta Martin).



Figure 15.
Cover Page of Chautauqua Program.
Courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri.

HORSE SHOWS AND RACES

An attachment to horses and horse racing was part of the cultural baggage the early settlers brought with them from Virginia and Kentucky, but that affinity was further aided by the region's climate and excellent pastures. In addition, Smithville became a center for recreational horse racing, drawing many of their spectators from the growing urban centers of Kansas City. For many years a major entertainment event in the project area was provided by horse shows. In later years races were also held.

The original horse show grounds was there where Coop Elevators is. That was where the original fairgrounds was . . . They later moved over to where the new fairgrounds was, that over there by where the housing is, as you go around the curve going up that blacktop road. You just go up around the hill, just over here to your right, you can look over and see where those old trees are around in there (Robin Lewis).

Yes, our first horse show grounds was where the Coop Elevator is. We had a little quarter mile track there and people from all around, from Kansas City, we would have big horse shows. It started about 1904 or '05 (Jesse Edwards).

At the old Coop Elevator out here was where the first horse shows was. I was a pretty small kid. They had horse shows there for a good many years, and of course we would come to the horse shows, they would have that during the summer. It would last for about a week (Reuben Ross).

The original site of the horse show was replaced by a facility closer to Smithville.

When I was 12, they bought this tract of land here and formed the fair association, and there was 100 men that put \$100 apiece in and started the Smithville fair. That is right over here, just east of this (government) housing, that was where that half-mile track was, north of the Little Platte. They bought this in 1912, and I think it took them about two years with all the grading and everything that had to be done with horses. The

first three barns that was built there, they took them apart and brought them here and set them up. In 1914 was when they had their first fair (Jesse Edwards).

Then in about 1914 they bought about 30 acres of land over here and put in a new race track, and they had horse shows over there for years. That is on the old highway. Old F highway going out of Smithville. It has growed up in brush now (Reuben Ross).

A wide variety of activities were available to those who attended the horse show.

They had the merry-go-round and fortune tellers and most any kind of a game you wanted to play, if you had any money (Reuben Ross).

They showed horses and cattle and all kinds of livestock (Jesse Edwards).

Young people enjoyed seeing each other at the fair.

That's where I met my wife (Willard Payton).

The Paytons met on one of the rides which had a bad reputation. They were on the lover's path.

It's one of the amusements like a carnival has, like the Sedalia fairs have. It was a big round thing and on it were several tubs that whirl this way and then they whirl that way. Well, when boys and girls rode on it, they were not just always good, you know. They are just like they are now. Well, it would whirl this way, and you got over on your boyfriend, whirl this way and he got over on you. What happened to me, my mother and father raised me strictly a nice girl and I never varied from it. But they objected my mother did, and she never waited until you got home, she acted now. So she politely came up there and she said, 'You get off of that.' That was about six months before I married him. She said, 'You get off of there.' I never realized how terrible that was, I was raised different. I have no evil thoughts. I just rode it for fun. But to my mother, she knew it wasn't the right thing to do so I was taken off, I guess she followed me and my girlfriend and her sweetheart, and I wasn't ever on it again (Nannie Payton).

The principal event was the horse show itself.

They showed saddle horses and five-gated horses. At that time they showed draft horses and colts and mules, and we had a regular little fair. Of night they would have horse shows. They rode horses, and they would have harness horses, and they would have pole teams and a lot of different classes that they don't have nowday in horse shows.

My father showed draft horses, and he showed mules and mule colts, and . . . I showed my pony. We had pony races, all kinds of plug races. They was harness horses that come from all over the country here to the fair, and so did running horses (Jesse Edwards).

They had one class late in the evening of a comical rider, the most comical rider--He's maybe get a burro mule, put on a funny uniform, get out there on that track between the grandstands and the audience, you know, and put on a show. They'd give him maybe \$5 or \$10 prize for first place. My brother won it one year. He rode a burro mule. That mule sometimes would throw him off (Claud Porter).

One of the most famous showpersons was Lula Long out of Kansas City.

She would bring these nice educated horses out here. They had rugs in those stalls where they kept those horses. She was an exhibitor. She showed all over the United States. She was the daughter of R. A. Long. R. A. Long was one of the big developers in Kansas City at that time. They had stalls and (their) own training track out south of Kansas City up close to Lee's Summit (Benton Summers).

Lula Long would always be there with her hack and ponies and they put on quite a little horse show (Claud Porter).

Some of the local youths devised ways of getting free admission to the horse shows.

Willard Walker was always a pal of mine. He lives in Washington, State of Washington now. He called me up and wanted me to stay with him through the horse show. And so, in the morning, or whatever time of day we took a notion to go down to the horse show, well his dad is at the gate, see, collecting, you know, for the ones. So when we go down to go in, Mr. Walker just--would just throw us on in. Of course he'd known me every since I was born. Willard was his own boy but it didn't cost either one of us anything to get in (Willard Payton).

Another inventive way of avoiding the entry fee was recalled.

I remember one funny deal about the horse shows. I had saved up a little money looking forward to the horse show, \$4 to \$5, that was a lot of money in them days. The horse show started, and I went to the horse show, and they had a carnival there, all kinds of entertainment, outside of the horse show, plenty of things to spend your money on, you know. So I went the first two to three days, and spent all the money. So I decided that was enough. The next morning a neighbor

come along in the buggy, and he was going to the horse show, and he wanted me to go with him. I told him that I had been there the last two to three days, and I spent all the money I had and didn't figure on going back any more. He says, 'Come on and go. You don't have to have any money.' He had been down to Smithville the day before, and they use to have little canes they would sell, and they had a little penant on them, a little three-cornered thing about that long. Somebody had give him a couple of them, and told him they was good for passes into the horse show. So he pulled them out of his pocket and says that he got two passes, says, 'You just as well come on and go,' and wouldn't cost nothing. Well I wasn't very hard to talk into it, so I got in the buggy and come to the horse show. I knew when he showed me them things that it wasn't no tickets, and no good for a pass. This horse show over here had a fence on it pretty near as high as this ceiling, wire fence and steel post. So when we come down from the horse show grounds on the north side, he just had one of these things, he could go down and get in. He pulled up to this high fence, and I stepped out on the buggy wheel and on top of the fence and jumped over and got in free. I knew he was coming around the gate there in the buggy. I got in, went walking across the horse show grounds, and he come on around turned in the buggy and of course the fellow there at the gate stopped him. Well he pulled this out, showed him. That guy shook his head, it wasn't no good, he couldn't get in. Well, he just had to turn around and go back towards town. I was in. You go on down to the south end of the fair ground, there was a little gate out there across the bridge, single person, the buggies and everything come in up at the big end. Well I went down and went out the little gate, and the fellow there at the little gate gave me a pass. I had to go over to town and hunt him up and his buggy, and I told him, 'Well, I've got a pass.' So, we got in the buggy, and I give him the pass and we drove around up and come down this hill again. He pulled up the fence, and I jumped over it, and he went on down there with the pass. We both got in (Reuben Ross).

After a period of time, the horse shows featured racing as well.

Later on after the regular old horse show played out, they started races. They had harness races here, and they had running races here, and they had them at the fair. They had two or three big harness races here in the '20's. At one time Smithville was on the grand circuit of harness racers and trotters (Jesse Edwards).

Long about, oh, 1910, or '11 they built the big race track, what I call the big race track, over east there in that

bottom where they used to have the races. They had harness races there, you know, that was quite a deal I thought then. They built that, as well as I can remember, along about 1910 or '11. It run until, oh, about the neighborhood 1915, and it busted up, quit having those harness races, and they went to having running races there. The Riverside Race Track down there on the river at North Kansas City was operating, and they would bring those horses up there and have running races (Claud Porter).

As during the horse shows, there were other attractions at the races.

I was down there one time, when there was some races. That was in the fall, and I don't remember an awful lot about it, except they had a lot of booths scattered around out here throwing balls at dolls, and all that crazy stuff. I can rember my Uncle Obe saying that they were going to have some horse races in town. He always walked around with a whip in his hand, and he was a strong fellow, big fellow. They had this one machine that would hit this ball, and the thing would go to the top and hit the bell. He could do that with one hand. I couldn't do it with two hands. There was a trick to it, the way you hit this peg that stuck up. I remember one time, maybe two times down at this horse show. They had quite a stand out there. There must have been 300 to 400 people (Benton Summers).

Although there is some disagreement among area residents about its legality, gambling was a part of the horse race action.

The Honorable Guy Parks was Governor of Missouri; so, he let them have running races; and they bet on them. He said you was contributing. People don't remember like I do, and they say anybody can go buy a ticket and that is right; because, it said up over the window, 'donation of \$2.' It wasn't paramutual like at Omaha. People then in Smithville was getting so much a day for the town, and the county would get so much out of it, and they was promoted to racing. We really got along good. They would have harness races at the fair, and they would have these running races. We have had 750 head of horses here (Jesse Edwards).

The first day after the old track had opened up, they formed this association. It was long about '25 or '26, about '26 when I think this track first started back operating. (Betting) was strictly illegal, but they let them get by with it. Nobody hollered about it (Robin Lewis).

Regardless of the legal dispute, many people enjoyed placing bets.

It was sometime around '27 or '28. Because I lost enough money on it, I ought to know. We used to bet. The girls would you know, and \$2 was the smallest bet you could make. All of us would go together and bet to show on it, and maybe we would come out 10 cents ahead. Lots of times I had every horse in the race bet on. Didn't win that way. We learned to read the daily newspaper that they get out the racing form. I know my girlfriend Roselia and I had one horse on the nose, it paid \$12 or \$15. We like to went over the fence. But, if we just bet to show, often times if the horse came in show, we would win maybe a quarter extra. But then we didn't have sense enough to quit (Lucile Wright).

Conversations with the trainers and riders who boarded in town influenced the bets of some local residents.

A lot of people stayed in homes that owned horses, and some of the jockeys did, and that way we used to have an inside track. We found out sometimes they were going to shoot the horses with some pep medicine of some sort, and we would kind of find out sometimes they were going to do that (Lucile Wright).

Knowing the jockeys was one way of avoiding the cost of admission.

They stayed at homes around town. They would say, 'Well you get up and come out, and we will see if we can't get you a pass.' Only thing I remember was that we got up at 4:00 the last few racings to watch the jockeys try out the horses; and, course, we knew some of them. They got all of us passes. We had to be Mrs. So-and-So sometimes, but we had passes. I think that is what broke them up (Lucile Wright).

There were other ways to avoid the entry fee for those who weren't interested in the outcome of the contests.

I can remember going down there. I don't remember how many cars would be there and how many people would be there. This would have been on a Sunday. We would set in the road, my dad and all of us; and we could watch the race. We could see almost all of it, we couldn't exactly see the finish. We didn't know exactly which horse won, it was immaterial; but you could see the race (Buster Summers).

The Smithville races were popular with more than the local folk. One of the most striking memories of the residents was of the crowds of "out-of-towners."

The line would just be jammed with traffic from Kansas City (Lucile Wright).

I can remember them telling about the streams of traffic (with people from) Kansas City coming out here to the races. Commercial Street here was the main highway. It came down to this corner and jogged over to this corner and went this way. That was the main highway (Charlie Taylor).

People from Kansas City would come over here on Sunday. They had awful crowds at them races (Reuben Ross).

One particular day was noteworthy because of the enormous crowd.

One Decoration Day, no it wasn't Decoration Day, it was Labor Day, that was in '29 after the bridge had gone out, I believe, '29 or '30. The old bridge went out in '29, it must have been in '30. There was only one way to get from the north side to the south side and that was down by where the old railroad bridge was. They laid boards down on the old railroad bridge, so cars could get across that. Well, from F. Highway over to the street where the fire station is was one way. There was about 100,000 people here for that one race. Cars were parked all over the north end of that place; and how in the world people got out here with those cars with that one-way traffic, I don't know. It was up until three or four o'clock the next morning before they got the cars out of here. You would hold them one way to go, then pretty soon you would hold them the other way, and let them go back and forth (Robin Lewis).

One Labor Day we had 25 to 30,000 people out here, and they had one-way traffic to Kansas City. They wouldn't let anyone come north because they had to double lane it to get--I don't yet know how we got all these people out here. Some of them went north and some of them went south, but the old blacktop was the only way out till they get so many miles out of town each way. We had a lot of people out of St. Joe, you see. It was 37 miles to St. Joe and at that time 22 to Kansas City, or 20 miles. People now, you talk to them, and they can't imagine how you got rid of that many people without any howling (Jesse Edwards).

The end of the Smithville races was assisted by the racing manager.

There was a man that come down here and told the association that (the current manager) wasn't giving them enough credit. They was pretty well fixed in favors. They had barns that they could stable about 600 to 700

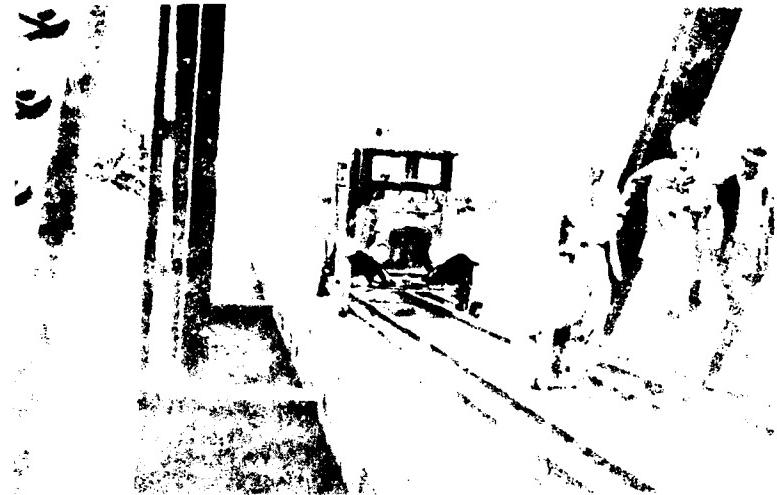


Figure 16.
Cars Crossing Railroad Bridge After Flood
of 1929. Courtesy Smithville Historical
Society.

horses. They had one of the best half-mile tracks in the United States, and he told them, 'My name is Cam Hastler, and I am from Chicago, and I will give you a bigger percentage.' Well, they took the track away from Bill Kline, and they let this Cam Hastler have the race track. He was managing it. Well, the races went off good. What would happen, you see, the people that owned the horses would leave their money, till the races was over, in a big bulk. The managers was supposed to have somebody watching the race track, watching the secretary's office; so, the last day of this race meeting, there was quite a bit of money, about \$32,000. So the manager, he told all that helped him that sold the mutual tickets and everything, he says 'Now this is the last race, and I want all to go ahead and watch it.' So they did; and, while they was gone watching that last race, the manager, he put all the money in the car. A man saw him fill up his car from Excelsior Springs, and nobody has heard of him ever since. That broke the association. They stood kind of dormant. I believe that was 1930 or 1931 (Jesse Edwards).

After the demise of the Smithville horse races, other contests were held at the racetrack.

Then to wind up with, they had automobile races, and that got a big crowd (Reuben Ross).

Motorcycle racing, I think they had some stripcar racing (Lucile Wright).

Then it finally died out and then had automobile races for awhile. There was (a) boy that got killed there one night. Blowed up. But that was after 1920's that they had those car races (Claud Porter).

Another horse track was in operation when the Smithville grounds ceased operation.

They had a track after ours quit. They had a track down in Riverside around 1932 (Lucile Wright).

See the Kansas City bunch tried to get in out here on this thing, and they wouldn't let them in. So they finally went over here and built Riverside Race Track, and they started the paramutual betting over there. I think they got a little bit crooked. Then they shut them down on that paramutual betting (Robin Lewis).

Riverside was one of the only place that they had running like that besides Platte County (Jesse Edwards).

Prior to the Smithville races, a track was in operation at Plattsburg.

They had horse races here in Plattsburg, in 1917 quit here. The race track was down here by the graveyard south of town, down there just before you get to that bridge over that big bottom in there, used to be the race track. It is on this side of the creek, you go down between the graveyards and the barns used to be around here used to be, and the graveyards bought part of the place. Now, where that little trailer (is) sitting down there, that used to be the race track, where the race track was, all around there (Roy Bailey).

The Plattsburg races also attracted outsiders.

Yes, they used to be a bunch of us. Lots of people had good horses, they drove them in them days. All them meat shops out of Kansas City would bring their horses up here, there used to be lots of fun at that race track (Roy Bailey).

Roy Bailey remembered observing activities at the training track near Plattsburg.

They use to have two race tracks here. They use to have a track south about five-miles south of town where they trained them horses. These farmers had a race track down there in the blue grass pasture where they had these fast horses. They would take them down there and ride them around there and train them. I went down there and looked at them driving them carts around down there. Four or five of them would get together and go down there and race them horses through the week. Walking horses, they had some of them around here, lots of pacers, and trotters around here. They would go down there and warm them horses up maybe twice a week. They would go down there and run them horses till they got them lathering good. Then they would take them and bring them back up here, blanket them up, and walk them back up here to the barn, then curry them off and such as that. They kept them right out there at that graveyard. The saddle horses, they kept them out at the farm; but them cart horses and such as that, they kept them out there, most of them. They use to take them out there till they would get them a good lather and then they would quit.

Finally, the Plattsburg track closed.

The old people that owned all them race horses and stuff was dying and such as that, and they just shut her down. Same was as with Smithville down there, they shut it down (Roy Bailey).

The remaining evidence of the Smithville track stood for a time after the races were no longer held.

The grandstand was torn down, back there in the '40's anyway, maybe before that (Robin Lewis).

When I started to school, you could see the concrete pillars that (the grandstand) stood on. The judges stand was out there a lot longer than the grandstand. I can remember it. The grandstand was gone the first time I was ever over there (Charlie Taylor).

Legislation of paramutual betting was an issue which was brought to Missouri voters in recent years.

There was five counties around Kansas City that wanted it and five counties around St. Louis that wanted it. These people in these counties around here realize that every day they would run at Omaha and Nebraska, there are 70 to 80 bus loads every Saturday. Them people goes up there and spends their money, and Missouri don't realize any of it. That would be going on right now, but a bunch of people won't approve it here (Jesse Edwards).

As the amendment did not carry, it was unlikely that racetracks such as those at Smithville, Riverside, and Plattsburg will open again in the near future.



Kansas City-Smithville Race Track

Figure 17.
Post Card View of Smithville
Race Track.



Kansas City-Smithville Race Track

Figure 18.
Smithville Race Track Grandstand.

MECCA

Located on lower elevations along the Little Platte River, Mecca has the distinction of being the only existing town to be destroyed by the reservoir. Established at the turn of the century:

The first name (Mecca) had was Yukon. That was when the P & G Railroad went through. That was Pittsburg and Gulf, and then it wasn't there very long until the Hicksons wanted to call it Hicksonville. They couldn't call it Hicksonville because there was another Hicksonville in the state of Missouri, and they was going to get a post office. They couldn't have two Hicksonvilles in the state. Then the postal department named it Mecca (Clyde Taylor).

Mecca, it just moved there when they built the railroad through there. Mecca used to be out there where that water is taken out there by that bridge. Used to be a bridge out there they used to call the Hickson Mill. Used to be a big old store that sat back down in the field there. Uncle Bill Hickson run it then. Then they had a blacksmith shop out there. Matt Greyson, and Bill Hickson, Dan Hickson, Walt Hickson, all them used to work in there shoeing horses and fixing wagons and things like that. Well, they moved it out. Mecca was moved out of two towns. Mecca moved when the railroad was built. That was way back there before my time, when the railroad was built. It must have been built in 1901 or somewhere along there (Roy Bailey).

Mecca had a large Black population at one time which began development following the Civil War.

My great great grandad, my grandmother's dad, bought the place when he come from the Civil War. He come from Kansas. He brought my grandmother and bought this land. He gave 35¢ an acre for it when he bought it (Roy Bailey).

In the twentieth century there were: "Around forty Black families around there and I expect fifty or sixty White families" (Roy Bailey). Reuben Ross Recalls:

It was quite a little town at one time, too. Lots of colored people. There was a whole community. Mecca is no more now. They had a good store in Mecca, and Taylor's had their saw mill there, grist mill. There was several Taylor boys, all of them run threshing machines. Their daddy had a mill there.

Ora May describes Mecca.

When I first saw Mecca; at that time there was one store and a drug store there. The man that run this store he bought chickens, cream and that kind of stuff. Then they had a doctor there. He was a druggist there, he done his own drugging, made his own medicine. I was pretty young back in that day. Dr. Mitchell was his name, he was a doctor around there for I don't know how long.

Clyde Taylor remembers the drug store as a source of one of his early business ventures.

Yes, they had a drug store there and they would throw the bottles away. I would gather them up and get a penny out of them and get a penny's worth of candy.

While never a large town, Mecca served the surrounding rural community.

Mecca itself wasn't very large, but then people from the surrounding areas came there and they would bring their cream and eggs and such into the store and trade those for groceries and other supplies. In those days, the little country stores had just a little bit of everything, even down to buggy wheels (Evalyn Taylor).

Way back there in 1915, somewhere along there, they had two stores. They was both grocery stores. You would trade in one or the other. Both of them had dry goods, groceries, all kinds of groceries. I've seen both of them stores full (Roy Bailey).

Besides running Shannon's Store, Alta Martin recalls that her father:

. . . also had a little poultry house across the road on the west side of the store. There was also a big scale where farmers weighed their wagons and so forth on the west side of the store. Then there was a big croquet court, which was nice for the young men in that day to play. Not very many of us (young women played) because there never was time. The men had it monopolized. Then there was the big Taylor's shop between the croquet court and the railroad which is now the road through Mecca east and west, it is down the old right-of-way. Then there was the barber shop. At one time there was another little grocery store call the Suther's Grocery Store and the Perry Birch Barber Shop. In later years, Ike McClain had a shop there and store, and then later Joe Lizer ran a store there. Of course the railroad brought a lot of business into the town. The post office and doctor was gone in my day.

Visitors to Mecca recall its size, businesses and the Taylors.

It was a little old town that had a grocery store, Taylor boys. There wasn't a church there, there was a church northeast of it (Eugene Arthur).

It was a very small town, one grocery store and a dry goods supply. They had a blacksmith's shop there and a saw mill and the Taylors, they run the blacksmith shop. They run the saw mill and also threshed during the summer (Virgil Bainbridge).

There was only one store as I remember. The railroad, the OK, went through there at that time. The road was between the merchantile store and the railroad station and the pens for the cattle, stock pens. Taylors always had a shop there, machine shop. Only later, fifteen years later, I really went back up there and got a good layout of the ground (Benton Summers).

Mecca and the surrounding community began to change in the 1950's.

A lot of the people were going into the city to get work, and there was more of the smaller farmers that were turning to carpenter work. Then the bigger farmers were trading the smaller farms, and bigger farms were farming on a bigger scale. More women were going to work in the cities and the hospitals around. There was quite a change (Evalyn Taylor).

Of even greater impact, of course, is the reservoir itself. The buildings are now gone and the landscape has changed.

There was a man that lived (there), and he didn't have to move, but he lost a lot of his land. He had grandchildren that he wanted to have this land, and he had always been a farmer and had lived there for many years. From the time he got married, he lived on this one place, and he lived in the neighborhood before that. Several people just got sick over the whole deal of having to be forced out of their homes and to give it up. Of course, my folks all being farmers and everything, it hurt me so much to see . . . they are taking the very best part of the farm land (Evalyn Taylor).

PARADISE

Although not within the pool zone, Paradise is immediately adjacent and will be affected by the changes the reservoir will bring about in the area. Originally established in the 1870's, the town supplied many services and goods for the surrounding countryside.

The first name was Gosneyville. There was an old fellow up there that owned the land, and his name was Gosney. He give them the land to build the school house and start a town and they called it Gosneyville. Along in the early 1900's, 1904 or 1905, they had a post office and a store. They done away with it, and the mail carrier got to coming out of Smithville, that was Route 2. That was along in the early 1900's. They named it Paradise, they changed it from Gosneyville to Paradise (Reuben Ross).

Oh yes, that's a fine little town. Now that was about two and a half miles by going through a neighbors pasture, cow track, with a horse and buggy. We went there about twice a year to shop. We didn't shop often, but we looked forward to each of us having a sack of candy, because my dad would buy a big order, shoes, some clothes, groceries and so forth; and a sack of candy went with it (Nannie Payton).

When I gre' up there were two general merchandise stores. There was a hardware store, a bank, a garage, a theatre. A doctor lived in town who had his office in his yard and never locked the door when he made house calls. He didn't have any problem with anyone going in and stealing his drugs while he was gone. Paradise was more or less like your quick-trip shops now. It was a place where anytime during the week you could run for whatever, a spool of thread, or some groceries you might need or things like that. The gathering place was more like Plattsburg, Kearney, or Smithville that you would go to (Frances Orr).

Before World War I, and during World War I, it was quite a town. It had two dry goods stores, and at one time two hardware stores. It eventually had a restaurant. It, at one time, had two barber shops, pretty near always had a barber shop, blacksmith shop. I expect old man Griffen had a big business, and at one time was a wealt'y man. He come to Paradise as a school

teacher. He married this Dryden girl, hear-say a lot of this is now, that she had a little money, and he talked her into investing it; and they built a store. They did, and it was a success. Then when they built the bank, why E. P. Griffen was the cashier that owned the bank. He was one of the best educated men that was ever around Paradise (Eugene Arthur).

Mr. Griffen had a general store that was an awful good store. He had groceries and dry goods and most anything you would want. Well, it even had drugs. Lon Vincent had a grocery store. Bob Nolan had a hardware store. Jay Minks had a restaurant, and (it) had a barber shop that Mike Howard run and a bank. Mr. Griffen that owned the store run the bank. We had a garage and had a picture show, blacksmith shop, doctor, three churches (Reuben Ross).

Paradise, when we moved up there, that was some little old country town. More business went on around that little old place. There was two general merchandise and grocery together, two hardware stores, a restaurant, barber shop, a bank, and a telephone office (Claud Porter).

Roy Bailey remembers:

It was off to itself, there wasn't any account to go there but just trading. A lot of people went down there trading because it was cheaper. They had a doctor down there, a Dr. Rue; most all the colored people would go down there and see him. That was the biggest thing about Paradise. See back in them days you didn't have phones, lots of them didn't have phones, and you had to ride a horse down there to get him. Paradise was never big for a crowd and such as that.

To get a good suit of clothes, Ora May recalls:

I used to go to Paradise once in awhile. Griffen run the store there, a grocery store and a dry goods store both; and I use to go down and order some clothes from him lots of time. It would take about two weeks to get it, and he was pretty good on it. He would take a tape measure and measure you, and you got your suit. It would fit you just like it was made for you.

Paradise, as nearby resident Buster Summers remembers, used to be a prosperous community.

When I was just a lad, around 1930, Paradise at that time had a poultry house and a restaurant and an ice house and a hardware store, two grocery stores and a barber shop and a bank and blacksmith shop and a garage combination. At one time there was a man that slaughtered hogs. She was a thriving town, and in the summer time in warm weather, if it had happened to rain on say Friday night, farmers couldn't work in the field and such on Saturday, I guarantee you had better get your horses

to town pretty early, or you would have to hunt a place to tie them. They had a hitch rack there in front of the stores that must have been 100 yards long. Men would come, kids would come, and they brought their wives. The wives went in the stores, and they looked through all the dry goods and what have you in both stores. Maybe they bought some and maybe they didn't. They visited and looked. The men sat around out on the sidewalk and benches and visited. The boys threw mud balls and had fights and just messed around and had a great big Saturday afternoon. I think the bank went broke in Paradise the 30th day of March, 1931, and that never did reopen, so it was gone forever. The other businesses were there, but they were declining, beginning to decline. People had cars and they were beginning to go to Smithville at least once a week. When World War II came, why the only businesses we had left in Paradise was the combination black smith and garage and two grocery stores. The hardware store had gone out of business, and then we had the garage. The man that ran it died, and no one ever reopened it. We had two stores, two grocery stores. Well, the Halferty's had gone into the implement business back in 1935 or 1936 with the son-in-law. He got to selling machinery; and along the tail end of World War II, their implement business grew, grew, and grew until they finally, sometime along in 1951 or 1952, they closed down the entire grocery operation. Then we had one grocery store. I don't know when it finally closed entirely, but would have been in the 1950's, maybe as close as 1960, I don't recall. Then the only business we had in town was H. H. Halferty and Son, the implement business and Paradise Locker. A man by the name of Dave Lizer run it, and he'd slaughter hogs and cattle and had a locker business. A can't remember exactly when he originally put in his locker, but it seems to me like it was 1945 or 1946, in the late 40's. Of course the slaughter house was there. The slaughter house burned in 1948 or 1940, sometime, and then he built on to the back end of his locker plant and had a new slaughter house back there. There used to be three or four men back there that killed hogs every day except Saturday and did a big business. People came here from far and near and brought beef and brought their animals in and had them slaughtered. That is one profession that will never be crowded, it is too nasty and hard of work for most people to stomach day in and day out. They make good money at it, but most don't want to work that hard. The town was full of kids when I was a boy, and I'm saying the Paradise grade school would have as many as sixty youngsters in it, that would be the eighth grade, up to the eighth grade. There would be twenty to twenty-five young men and women in high school. When they got through with their two years here, they would go to Smithville, there were a few that did (Buster Summers).

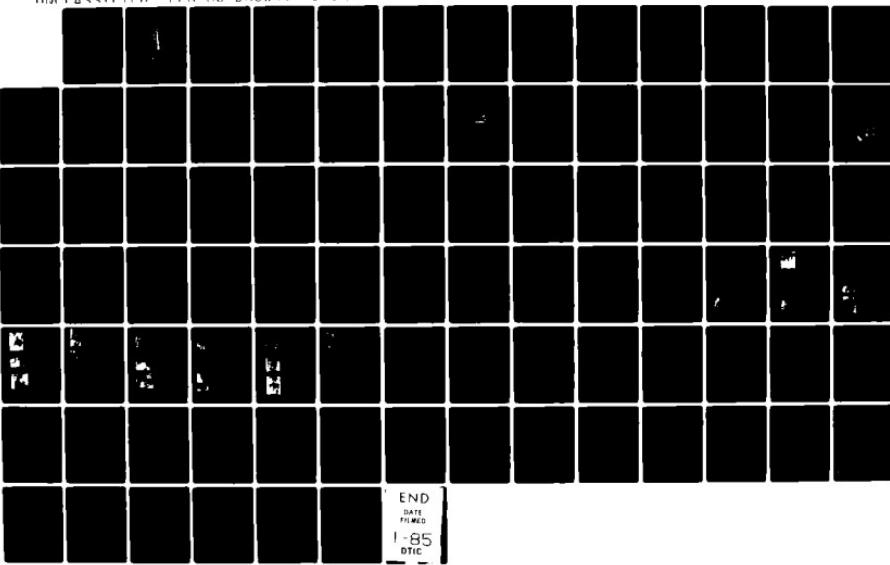
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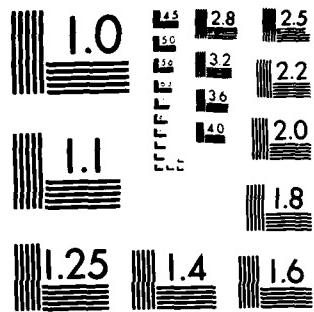
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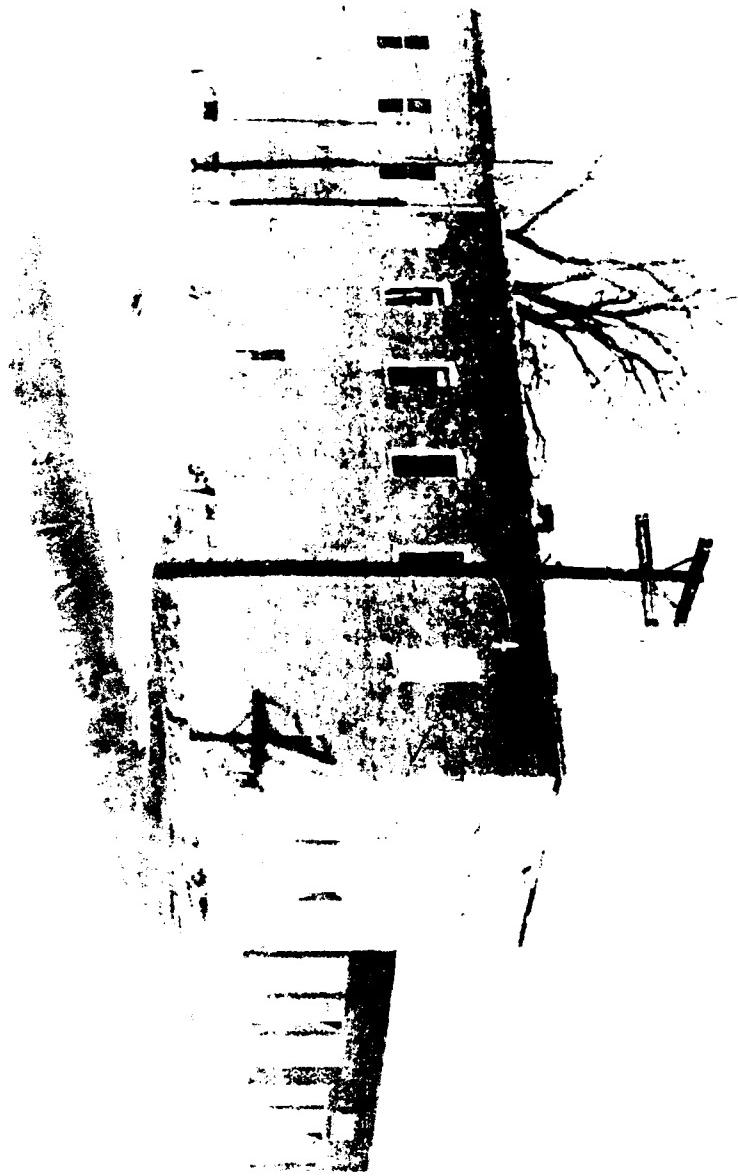


Figure 19.
Downtown Paradise: February 1980.

SMITHVILLE

Incorporated in the 1860's, the town of Smithville is a major population center in the area. Of all the communities to be affected by the reservoir, Smithville may profit the most as a result of the flood protection the new dam will provide. Many past and present residents and visitors recall the town from the turn of the century on.

Well, back in those days they (went) to Smithville in the old spring wagon. Maybe get a nickle's worth of candy. Back in those days the sidewalks in Smithville was wood, made out of boards two by something, I don't know what they was. Of course, it's changed around Smithville quite a bit from what it was in those days. The bridge that went out of Smithville north there was what they called the Old Wagon Bridge, was just a single-way bridge, one way. The floor of it was plank wood. It washed out, I think it was 1929. Right east of it was the old railroad bridge where the railroad crossed the river. Just north of that was the coal chute. The water tower for the railroad was at the south end of this railroad bridge and just north of that why they had what they call the coal chute. They would scoop the coal up in bins and this bin would lift down. They had an old man by the name of Lay that kept those bins full. The engine would pull up there and dumped the coal in there, hopper behind the engine, you know (Claud Porter).

There was a Mr. Morton that owned most of the stores. Now it was like a dry goods store, a grocery store, a funeral home. That was a place where you kept the coffins. It wouldn't be a funeral home as you know it. (It was also) a furniture store where my dad bought all my furniture when I went to housekeeping. Well, he just practically owned every essential hardware and everything that you really needed in homes. It hasn't been many years since (there) was part of the store still being used (Nannie Payton).

If we went to Smithville it would take nearly all day. You know that's a funny thing. Now you can go to town in a few minutes, and you see a neighbor, and you hardly have time to wave as you go by. Then you ran a wagon or buggy, and the neighbor was working close to the fence, why you'd stop an' visit for thirty minutes or maybe an hour. You were in no hurry, you know. Now you don't

have time hardly to look to see who it is as you go by
(Shorty Harris).

The mills, floods, race tracks, chautauquas, businesses, and the other ingredients that have gone into the development of Smithville comprise extensive portions of other topics dealt with and leave little dialogue for the town itself.

Like many other communities located near major metropolitan areas, Smithville has experienced the "commuter effect". Further, the losses resulting from floods have discouraged new and continued business enterprise. The reservoir is seen by some, however, as a means of revitalizing the community.

It had started to decline (in the 1940's). The grocery business was real good, but as far as your clothing and furniture now it wasn't. People went to the city to buy a lot of that. Just before the floods, the Mortons had groceries in their store (as did) Campbells and Carvers. There were four or five grocery stores just before the (1965) flood and up until last year we had just one. Now Mr. Campbell did go back in after the flood, and they had a minimarket here for awhile, but they had a supermarket out there and he got most of the business. My dad had a grocery store here. Before that, the early part of the 1960's, there was six or seven of them and they all made a living. Nobody got rich on them, but they made a living. The flood sort of finished off what had been started. There was several vacant buildings, but there was more after the flood. I am sure it was because of the availability of going to the city. You had more to pick from. I don't think in my time I will see (Smithville) flourishing. The downtown part here will be more or less souvenirs, antique shops, and gift shops. It is kind of the way I feel like it will be. It is going to be a long time before (something) like a good clothing store arrives (Lucille Taylor).

NATIONAL EVENTS

The effect of incidents which occurred on a national level was also felt in the project zone. Residents of the area supported the war efforts during both World War I and World War II. An influenza epidemic in 1918 did not spare the Smithville Lake region. Prohibition allowed for a booming business in bootlegging, and several individuals in the area profited from this opportunity. Hardships were endured by everyone during the Depression. While all of these events had negative effects on the area, a positive impact was evident in drawing the community members together. As in so many other facets of their lives, from work to play, area residents banded together and drew on each other for assistance and strength.

World War I

Every community in the United States knew the loss of sending its young men off to the battles of the first World War. The Smithville Lake region was no exception. Along with the contribution of man power, the farming area made other sacrifices.

Age limits and other restrictions prevented some men from being called to serve.

I was a farmer, you see, and farmers (were exempted). Then being married, my wife pregnant, was another exception. Another thing, I was too young for World War I and too old for World War II (Willard Payton).

Enlistment and conscription, however, took many of the local men to war.

I remember some of the boys volunteering. When one went down to volunteer, they all wanted to go down and volunteer. My brother waited for a draft. It seems to me like the draft went into effect on the second of June and he was twenty-one years old the third (Eugene Arthur).

Farm animals were donated for actual use by the military as well as for fund raising benefits.

They came to our house. We had a horse which I was very fond of, and they took our horse for World War purposes, and I think I cried for days because they took our horse. That was one of the things that impressed me at that time as a child. Then our neighbor boys across the field, Pearsons, were drafted. One went on into the service, and I can remember him getting a leave and coming dressed in khaki and impressed me you know. Those things are things that stand out most in my mind when I think about the war (Alta Martin).

I remember some of the bond drives. Somebody would donate a pig or whatever, and they would have an auction to sell it to the highest bidder. As soon as they bought it, of course; why, they would say, 'are you going to give it back to us?' They would say, 'oh, yes, I'll give it back to you.' They would sell that one item maybe five, six, seven times whatever, raising money for bonds during that time (Benton Summers).

One of the most striking effects of the war on the farming community was the impact on grain and livestock prices as well as on wages for farm hands.

Things were pretty cheap before that. They went to going up, help got scarce. I remember my father had a man helping to pitch hay. He charged Dad \$5 a day. Boy, Dad hit the ceiling (Eugene Arthur).

Grain prices were regulated.

Wheat went up to \$2 a bushel, and I think it would have went a lot higher, but they put a ceiling on it (Eugene Arthur).

I can remember also, at that time, (a practice) which affected us directly was when they put a high level on the price of something, the ceiling price. I can remember my dad and I were in Edgerton, Missouri to sell some wheat that he had in the elevator. I think he was offered \$2.03 for it, and he thought he ought to have another penny or two a bushel, and he didn't sell it. They put this ceiling on it in the next two or three days and just knocked off 50¢ a bushel (so) \$1.50 a bushel was the ceiling on wheat, and it stayed on. I don't know how many bushels he had then, but it amounted to several dollars, and that was quite a blow. I remember that very well (Benton Summers).

Livestock prices soared.

Everybody was all out to help all they could during the war. They would make money for the Red Cross. Cattle prices went up, hog prices went up. The first hogs I ever sold was either during the World War or shortly thereafter, for 33¢, unheard of price.

During the Depression I sold them for 3¢ a pound.
I don't know how high cattle got during World War I.
I guess hogs got higher than cattle (Eugene Arthur).

Besides sending their male relatives and friends to battle, the women of the area donated time to making comfort items for the soldiers.

The women folk in the different homes, they spent their time knitting socks and what they called shawls. They were furnished the yarn, I don't remember about the needles. Our mother was the head of the knitting of the Blue Cross in this area. Many, many a night she sat up till the wee hours unraveling the toes of socks that she knew would hurt a man's feet when he put his shoe on and reknit them so that they would not be hard (Benton Summers).

At the close of the war in 1918, residents of the area could justly feel that they had made a major contribution to the war effort.

Influenza Epidemic of 1918

Toward the end of World War I, sickness swept across the nation. Many residents of the project zone suffered from the virus which was later called "swine flu".

Entire families contracted the disease, and many people in the area lost their lives to it.

I think I was about the first one around Paradise that took the flu. I was pretty sick, I know that. It went all through the family. We all had it (Eugene Arthur).

In 1918 the epidemic hit, and everyone at our house took down with the flu but me. We had to call a neighbor man which was a cousin of ours, Rolley Davidson, to take care of the store, cause they were all sick--some of them upstairs, some of them down. I knew very little about cooking, but I knew how to make corn bread and fried potatoes. I think I fed him this every day he was there for dinner. I bet he wouldn't eat it later. I was carrying pills all over the house. The doctor come and left some pills and directions how to give the medicine, and I was a busy girl. We heated the house with coal and wood combination, you mixed it in the stoves. Besides keeping the stoves fired up and the house warm and carrying water from an outside well and waiting on them, I had plenty to do as a child of eleven. When they got over the flu epidemic, then I took sick with it. Thank goodness I held out till they got well. It was

that same flu epidemic, our Grandpa Taylor, we called him, he died that year with it. It seemed to me like folks were sick about two weeks because it was pretty severe. They they had to be careful for a time after that, getting out in the weather. They didn't have the antibiotics and things to doctor with then as they do now. Seems to me like I dished out an awful lot of quinine, which you don't hear of nowdays (Alta Martin).

We all had the flu and was pretty sick with it for about two weeks. But most of us, we all got over it, straightened up and got along all right. There was a lot of people who didn't get along. I know I was going to school, and I was out of school for two weeks with the flu (Virgil Bainbridge).

Neighbors assisted each other as much as possible, however the fear of exposure to the disease affected the manner of help offered.

I was big enough that I done chores, feeding and taking care of the stock what little there was to do for three different families while they all had the flu, and neighbors around down there. I never did take the flu till after everybody was over with it, and then I got it. It wasn't too bad. It would take me maybe half to two-thirds of a day to take care of all of them, milk their cows and feed their hogs and chickens. They paid me for it, most of them. I got a little salary out of it (Hugh Martin).

The people would help out each other. If they come to help you or anything, why they wouldn't go into the house, you know, just come and talk, do whatever, polite things like that (Virgil Bainbridge).

Most people avoided the sick rooms.

People in the country, maybe they did it everywhere, but when somebody got sick, you went and helped care for them; but when that flu epidemic came, everybody that went to help somebody else got it themselves. There was so much sickness and deaths and the doctors just couldn't begin to get around to taking care of people. They made house calls then. There wasn't anything like going to the hospital to be treated; and if a doctor had to travel four or five miles between each patient, he couldn't see too many patients during the day. The neighbors got afraid to go in, and in fact the people were ill. They were so deathly ill they didn't want anybody to come in, they didn't want to pass it on. Maybe you would fix some soup and take it and set it on their door step, and somebody of their family would pick it up to eat. My father's sister died with it and one of his nieces died with it, but our family didn't have it.

My father went to see his sister, and he heard how sick she was. She looked out of her upstairs window and saw him coming, and she told her family not to let him come in because he had a little girl at home that she didn't want to have the disease. So he didn't get to go in, but his sister died. My mother and father went to the funeral, and they did take me. In fact there wasn't such a thing as babysitters. Anyplace that my family went, I went too (Frances Orr).

Burial services were given special precautions.

It used to (be) the funerals were all in churches, there wasn't such thing as a funeral home. They would have the funerals either outdoors at the cemetery or at the family home. The casket and service would be outside the house; because they felt like you would definitely get the germ if you went into the home. A lot of times the bedding and everything would be taken out and burned after the first one had passed away; because this flu epidemic was a terrible thing (Frances Orr).

Claud Porter described his bout with the flu.

(The flu) liked to killed me in 1918. Oh, they give me up for dead. They didn't think I'd live. I had dug a well that fall, and one of the neighbor boys had helped me two or three or four days on this well. I was down in that well practically all day about twenty-two feet. Went in and eat a good dinner, felt good, went home that night and done my chores; and when I got in the house, I was just simply played completely out. You know, just pooped. I just dropped in the chair. Next morning I got up, thought I would go, and I didn't get fifteen foot from the bed until I had to turn around and get back in bed. I just couldn't make 'er. We called a doctor by the name of Wicker then in Smithville. He was a new doctor who come in there. Our old family doctor, Doc Woods, he was run to death and we called this Wicker over. Well the fact of the business, I think he was in the neighborhood to see another patient. We called for him to stop. He come in there and felt my pulse, looked me all over, and dished me out about a double handful of pills. I was to take one or two every three hours, I think it was. The next day he didn't come, but the next day he did. He come in and looked me over, felt my pulse, never even examined me for pneumonia or nothing, and told me, 'Oh, you still got trifle fever but I think you'll get along all right. Just keep taking those pills.' So her father came over there. Well I told her before her father come, 'I'm taking pneumonia. I can feel it in my chest.' I was spitting up blood and old brick dust, coughing, you know, and spit up like you do when you have pneumonia. Well her father came over there, and she told him what I had said out in the other room, and he

come in there to the bed (and) asked me how I was feeling and all. He said, 'Grace said you thought you were taking pneumonia.' I said, 'Well I kind of suspicioned that I am.' He wanted to know why, what made me think so. He said, 'Well, didn't that doctor examine your lungs, examine you for pneumonia?' And I said, 'No, he never touched me only felt my pulse.' 'Well,' he said, 'we better get another doctor.' The Inner Urban was running at that time from Kansas City to St. Joe. He called Herdon from Camden Point and he came down on the Inner Urban to a little old station on that line, Kerr Station; and he met him out there. Herdon got there, and when he examined me, he told him 'He's got pneumonia in both lungs and got it bad.' I guess from that day on for nine days, I didn't know nothing; but I fooled them. The ninth day, that night, Herdon he came to see me that afternoon, and he wanted to know if we had a bed he could stay and sleep in and all. He stayed there that night. Next morning I felt better. Pneumonia was agoing with the flu that fall. There was a lot of people that had the flu would take pneumonia with it, you know. Oh, people wouldn't come, people was afraid of it. There was nobody come in there. One night I got up out of bed, I was out of my head, of course, I didn't know what I was doing. My mother was sitting up with me. I got her by the throat and was choking her to death. There was one old bachelor, he went and got his horse and come. Nobody would go anywhere. They thought it was contagious and maybe it was (Claud Porter).

Along with a high fever, the other symptoms of the flu were most unpleasant.

Felt like dying and couldn't. I would just get to coughing and blood would run out of my nose. It is different from what they call the flu now. It made you sick (Clyde Taylor).

Fear of a second epidemic of this dreaded disease resulted in mass vaccinations in the mid 1970's.

Prohibition

In 1920 the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution made the manufacturing, vending, and possession of alcoholic beverages a crime. Illegal stills operated throughout the country, and within the project area "bootleggers" were able to turn a profit making "home brew".

Edgerton was loaded with bootleggers; Smithville was loaded with bootleggers. They didn't all make it (whiskey). There was a few of them that made it, and a few of them that sold it. They generally went to the guys that sold it. Some of them colored their liquor with burnt peaches or apricots to put a color in it, made it look like old fashioned liquor. That was better than the corn liquor (Hugh Martin).

Stiff penalties were imposed on those who violated the law. Hugh Martin recalled the fate of an offender who was apprehended at a Mecca Fourth of July celebration.

I don't know how they got word that this boy had some bootleg whiskey in his car. The sheriff come down there and hid and watched as he went to take a drink. They grabbed him and grabbed the bottle. He almost poured it all out, he almost got rid of all the evidence. They took the bottle over to the shop and locked it up in (Taylor's) shop. Clyde Taylor and I went over there and poured it out and washed the bottle. They brought it up for trial in Plattsburg, and this boy's father was very religious. He smelled of the bottle, and he said, 'By grannies, that is whiskey, I can tell by the smell of it.' There wasn't a drop of whiskey in it, it had been washed; but there might have been a little smell. They stuck the boy \$100 fine.

Reuben Ross had an experience with a bootlegger while working on the county roads and was rewarded for his work.

We graded the roads through Hatischell timber, that is down below here of Excelsior Springs. That was a big patch of timber that belonged to the Hatischell's for years. That was the name of the family. They wouldn't let nobody cut a stick of wood out of there. It was all growed up there with them big old white oak trees. The county finally got permission to put a road right through this timber. Me and my partner graded the road, cleared that timber out. It was a big job. That was back in bootleg days; and right down below, in the bottoms of this timber, was a little town they called Miltondale, just a station there. There was a big bootlegger that lived there making corn whiskey. He had look-outs around. There was an old fellow that lived back up in the timber in a little house; and, he was fixed up all right with the Clay County Sheriff and all that, but he didn't know about the Revenue. They would take a lot of this whiskey into Kansas City. A truck would come out of there at night and bring the empties back and picked up the full ones. It was quite a business. He was pretty bold about it, this fellow that was making it. People would drive out there from Kansas City right in the daylight, and there would be four or five cars there. They liked his whiskey, and it was cheaper, too. He had a pretty successful business, and we worked around there for a couple of

months, clearing this road. It come on out by where he lived. There was three of us riding on the grader, and we had a helper, you know, to clean up and carry brush out and stuff like that. I was on the tractor, the other guy was on the grader. When we finished up, we would go down to this Miltondale and turn around. (The bootlegger) lived right there across the road. We was finishing up and he had two or three cars there at the house. Well, he come walking out after we turned around and started back up the road, and he come walking out to the tractor, and he stepped up on the tractor. He says, 'are you getting about done?' I says, 'this is the last round.' Well, he says, 'this is a dandy road.' He was tickled with the road, it was a big benefit to him. He told me, 'wait a minute.' So he got off and went back out there. He was gone a little bit and come back with a grocery sack in his hand. He climb up and sat it down in the seat behind me. This tractor had a seat on it that was wide enough for two. He sat this sack on the seat, and said, 'this is for you boys.' Well, the helper and the other was back on the grader, and we went back up the road to this old fellow's house (who) was a look-out for these revenue men and would tip (the bootlegger) off. Well, we went back up to this old fellow's house, when we got done; and he was an old bachelor, he had all kinds of bottles. We went up to divide it up and come home. Well, this helper we had, he really liked whiskey if he got around it. He got drunk while we was getting it divided up. He kept a drinking, and I think I took a quart, and my partner up there took a quart, and this other guy, he was supposed to get a quart again when we got it divided. This helper was drunk, too drunk to drive. He had brought his boy with him that day, twelve or fourteen years old. He was old enough to know his dad was drunk. We got it divided up and was ready to come home, me and my partner was in an old Model T pickup, and this other fellow was in a Model T coupe. This boy told us before we got started, 'I want to ride with you.' He was afraid to ride with his dad, and he rode on through Liberty before we was going to separate, and his dad followed. He made it. He forgot to lower the window before he spit, and he had been spitting on the window. The boy got out and got in with him and we come on. Not long after the road went in, they done away with the prohibition (Reuben Ross).

Destroying the bootlegger's equipment was common practice.

Claud Porter participated in a raid on a local still.

There was quite a few. In fact long about 1929, I think it was, I helped raise one. Got my foot in the wringer, and when I got out of that I thought, 'the heck with it.' I had my nose where I didn't have no business, and from now on I was going to keep my nose out of other fellow's business. There was some pretty good ones, I guess, around over the country. Around Hoover, there was two or three boys around there. They'd go get them a bottle

of that moonshine, you know, and break into that Hoover store and get into something. There was another one right east of Hoover, just about a half mile. Some (people) out of Kansas City rented this house from this fellow, a little two storey house, and come out there and moved into this house; and they was operating a still. They knew they was, and they went in there and raided it one night. Scared them people to death. Boy, they told them, 'If you turn us loose, we'll get on that Inner Urban and get out of the country and never come back.' And they did, they let them go. They burned this house. So awhile after that, this old man--his name was Greer. Him and his wife, oh I'd judge he was a man of fifty or sixty years old. He just lived in kind of a little old shack back in the sticks. They told me some of them was going to raid it a certain night, said, 'We want you to come.' Well, I had a boy working for me from Oklahoma plowing corn. That evening--his name was Pete James--I said, 'Pete, do you want to go help raid a still tonight?' 'Oh,' he said, 'not that I know of. I'd just kind of like to see one of those. I never saw one.' 'Well,' I says, 'I think I'll go. They're going to raid a still over there in the sticks and I've got an invitation, and I think I'll go.' 'Well,' he says, 'if you're going, I'll go along.' So we went. He had her in operation right there in a little lean-to porch in that house. He had her fired up and was cooking that night. He had White Lightning, Mule, whatever you want to call it in fruit jars and jugs and everything else. I never seen as much bootleg liquor in my life. They went to breaking them bottles and busting that still, and I had a pretty good pair of leather shoes, leather soles. It just eat the soles off of them shoes, the lye that was in it. We busted everything up and burnt the durn house down, and this old man was pretty snotty to start with and all. He finally wound up, he was kinda tamed down a little bit. We warmed his tail a few licks. Took everything out of his house, all of his bed clothes and furniture and everything and set out in the yard and burned his house down (Claud Porter).

Virgil Bainbridge remembered several bootleg businesses which operated in the area.

(Charlie Arthur) had a still here, but it wasn't very big he told me. I was kidding him about it one day. When we bought the place, why part of the old still was still here. I was kidding him about it and he says 'I could drink it faster than that old still could make it.' North of the old home, there was a fellow north of us there, he run a still for awhile. One thing about a still, when the wind got in the right direction you could always smell them. This fellow north of us, you could smell the whiskey, the fumes off of it. I don't know, he didn't run it too long, and I think he got scared and quit. Then there was another fellow found it out and turned him in. He had to close up. That was in time of Prohibition. There used

to be a still just west of Smithville. Of course, Clay County was a dry county and Platte County was a wet county. Well, some fellow went out right west of Smithville, just over the line in Platte County and put up a still and run it. He run it there for a long time, right at the edge of the dry county. Finally, of course, he couldn't make it or something, anyway he quit making it (Virgil Bainbridge).

Repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1933 legalized liquor production, and many small operations were killed by competition with larger firms.

Now the only still I know of is over at Weston. McCormicks over there, they still make it. It's going right along, that still (Virgil Bainbridge).

The Depression

In 1929 the fall of the stock market signalled the onset of an economic upheaval in the United States. Residents of the project area were affected by the great Depression in many ways. Although the agrarian community did not suffer in the same manner as metropolitan inhabitants and "soup lines" were not necessitated in the Smithville Lake region, money was not plentiful and employment was hard to find. Many of the small towns within the project area never recovered from the decline they experienced during the Depression.

(Paradise) started going down about the time the banks started going broke, back in the 1930's (Robin Lewis).

I would say during the Depression was when (Mecca) started its decline and never did get back (Hugh Martin).

Nearly everyone lost money when the local banks closed their doors.

I remember the night (the Smithville Bank) closed. I went home and told Dad, I said, 'you will find the bank closed in the morning.' I was working at the theatre then. He says, 'oh, no, the bank won't be closed.' I says, 'it will be closed in the morning, you wait and see.' Of course, I told him why I knew. He couldn't believe me. I won't repeat the story of why I knew. I didn't see them carry the safe out. I couldn't say if there was money there. (The next day) you couldn't find enough money in town to do business on. What you had put in the day before was gone (Robin Lewis).

Their livestock and garden produce prevented the farm people from starving; however, luxuries were rare.

I don't know anybody around this area that really suffered from the Depression. The ones that said they didn't have any money, I guess that was right. They didn't have any money to spend foolishly. Some of them made a little. Most of this was farming community at that time, and as long as they raised anything, they didn't go hungry. Money was short. Nobody was out spending money foolishly, you know. Everybody had enough to eat. As long as they was raising crops everybody got along all right (Robin Lewis).

Living on a farm, you just hardly couldn't get ahold of a dollar. Of course you had your living. You had a cellar full of fruit and vegetables, canned meats, and all of that. You had your chickens, cows, and everything (Willard Payton).

We wasn't as bad off as a lot of people because at that time I raised chickens; and, as I said, we had our cow and raised a good garden. I canned, and when they would get paid for their threshing or anything, they would go and buy a ton of flour. That would go through three families, so we would buy all our flour at one time. We have bought a barrel of peanut butter. The families would all have peanut butter, and we had our own cow, butter, and milk and eggs. We never raised hogs, but maybe we might buy a couple of hogs and kill them ourselves and have our meat and so forth. Really, we weren't as off as a lot of people were (Evalyn Taylor).

We would buy wheat, and we would buy oats, and we would buy corn. We would bring it in home there, and we would run it through the old corn crusher, and that fed our cows and saved us money (Clyde Taylor).

Farming and related businesses sustained losses when the prices of farm products dropped.

When the Depression started, I'd just bought a truck. The country was full of cattle and hogs, and they was feeding like mad, corn and everything. I had the best year in 1929 at any time trucking, and 1930 wasn't bad because they started to ship and sell and get rid of them. Then of course, in 1931 it about all went to pieces, and then in 1932 I quit. I had just the same amount of money I had when I started trucking, and I said, 'well, there is no use of me gambling it away to go buy another new truck and start over,' because I didn't know how long that thing was going to last (Hugh Martin).

People were living pretty good, and all of our money was taken away. We had an awful time in making ends meet. We had to live very sparingly. The saying is we

didn't spend any money on (non-necessities). Of course, we had cars then, we didn't drive them any more than we had to. We didn't have any money, we had to get along. Then banks all around here was closed, and you couldn't get ahold of any money. We had a few cattle here, and we sold some cattle, and I went to Kansas City and brought the cash out. The only cash we could get. We cashed the check, got the money for the cattle over there, and brought it home. We had to live on . . . whatever it was. We had to make a go. We lived very sparingly. We didn't go hungry or anything like that, but we didn't have too much of anything else (Virgil Bainbridge).

I was telling some younger fellow about the Depression. We were standing in front of the meat counter, and he was going to buy a piece of meat. I don't know how the Depression started. This butcher, Bullocks is his name, was standing back there. He, I guess, was listening to us and I said, 'During the Depression, there was a time when a 200 pound hog, fat hog, and you took it to market or the stockyards; and, after they took out the commission and trucking, that 200 pound fat hog just meant a \$5 bill.' And I said, 'There's a roast laying right there that would cost just as much as a 200 pound fat hog.' He said, 'Are you telling me the truth?' Bullocks spoke up back there, and said, 'Well, he sure is telling you the truth.' Things just went to nothing. Well, you can figure hogs went to \$2.75 a hundred, so you can go from there and see that it didn't bring but a \$5 bill (Willard Payton).

Besides canning and butchering to put food on their own tables, farm families sold their goods and services.

He milked cows and I turned the cream separator to get extra money we needed for school tuition and clothes. I made butter and sold it at town. Willard kills beef, and he and a neighbor--he knew just how to cut it just like a butcher--and he would take it to town in the wagon and go house to house up the street and sell it to people. Then he sold it to the butcher there. Some of them would take a half of a beef in their butcher shop (Nannie Payton).

Farm wives found numerous ways to stretch the few dollars they had.

I groundwheat that he had and made our own cereal, and I had always made lye soap to wash with. Well, I used Borax in it and rendered out tallow to make it white soap. When it was cooked and ready, you stirred that by process, you didn't boil it. Then I would put it in teacups and mold it like toilet soap. You made your clothes from feed sacks you know. The feed sack man said the women always wanted the lower sack in their pile because it matched the other one make a dress (Nannie Payton).

During the Depression, many of the residents of the area were forced to move elsewhere in an attempt to find work. Within the project zone, as in other places, employment was difficult to obtain and wages were low.

During that Depression you couldn't buy a job; if (you) had the money you couldn't have bought one. One fall I cut up twenty acres of corn, shock corn, to sow it in wheat for the next year. Well, I shucked on that shock corn along all winter. I used to know how many shocks was on twenty acres but I forgot. Anyway, long towards spring--well the weather was getting warm--the wheat was beginning to grow and I seen I wasn't going to get that corn out by myself. So there's always someone sitting around on the street down here wanting somebody to come by and give them some kind of a little job or something you know. So I come down here one morning and--it was Lyle Warren and Harold Wayman--and I asked them if they wanted to shuck some shock corn. They said they did and they would. I hired them to shuck corn, dollar a day, and they walked three miles out to home, brought their lunch if they had any, and walked three miles back for that dollar a day. At that time we had a lot of chickens, and I had to sell some of my wife's hens to pay them. That's just how hard money was (Willard Payton).

Government intervention, through the WPA projects, provided some jobs in the area.

When this WPA works all started, they was a lot of them that got on it because they needed some money to pay their taxes. Taxes was something else, they had to be paid, so they went out and got on a lot of that. They had some old rock quarries around here. They did a lot of quarrying and did a lot of gravelling on these country roads. The other deal they had was building the government two-holer. I know it was a standing joke (Robin Lewis).

I went back to the farm in 1931. It was pretty tough. I got laid off, and the Depression come here, and I went to work down here on the court house and the WPA outfit. I worked on that a little bit, and then they turned me off that and wouldn't let me work. My wife was working at \$7 a week, they wouldn't let me work. They said we was making too much money. I would just go around and pick up little jobs this and that 50¢ to \$2 till that next spring. I was working for Dedmonds (when I got laid off in 1931). I was getting \$2.50 a day; and when I went back, I was getting \$1.25 a day. I worked out there for one year, and then they raised me back to \$2.50 a day (Roy Bailey).

Project area residents survived the Depression with characteristic stamina. Some of the towns, however, were never able to

rebuild. Perhaps the longest lasting effect is the fear of a recurrence. "I'm awfully afraid that it's going to happen again" (Willard Payton).

MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Development of mechanical devices to provide transportation, power, entertainment and numerous other needs has a universal affect. Within the project area the effect of the introduction of machinery not only made life easier but in many cases altered the social structure. Agricultural methods changed with the introduction of tractors and combines as discussed in the section on farming. The chapter on food preparation and preservation notes that as progress brought the means of diminishing the work involved with food production, it also decreased the community effort in this area. Interaction among the residents of the project area felt the impact of each invention.

An early sign of progress was represented by the railroad. Trains linked the project area towns with major cities and were the first type of public transportation. Mail delivery, livestock shipment, and travel all relied on the trains which once made daily runs through the area.

I don't remember when (the railroad) was built. It was built a few years before I was born (in 1899) I think, to be exact, two, three years maybe. It seems to me it was put in here in the '90's (Jesse Edwards).

Several lines serviced the area and many of the towns had train stations.

About 1900, they tore a depot down at Nashua and built them a new one down there and moved the old depot up to Mecca. Then they also moved the old box car, the old Mecca box car, over on the same side of the tracks. The pasture depot was there and we had a freight depot and a passenger depot (Clyde Taylor).

For awhile there they had the CB&Q, that was the Quincy, Omaha, and Kansas City. The Grand Island ran over these same tracks up here above Trimble. You can still see there where that white hog farm is; Trimble Manor they call it. Right across the road from it, there is still a place there that you can see the sign of that old railroad where it went off towards Omaha. The other one went

through Plattsburg, Cameron, into Quincy, Illinois. We had two, three trains each day for a long time, and then they cut down to maybe one train a day. Before it went out, there was a train every two, three days (Jesse Edwards).

This is the old OK Railroad right here. QO Quincy and KC, went up through Plattsburg (and) went on to Quincy, Illinois. There was a branch that went off from Trimble to St. Joe. That was called the Grand Island. They both went over this into Kansas City (Reuben Ross).

Don Breckenridge remembered the OK Railroad.

We had four trains a day (at Mecca) at one time, and two of them was larger than the other two. None of them very big, because that was the short line of the Burlington. (There was) not over two passenger cars; and sometimes they would have an express car, a mail car, or something like that. As I recall it, it didn't have any cattle cars or coal cars or anything like that. It was a passenger train. (The train traveled) each day, back and forth. It never really did go anyplace much. It went to Cameron. It was just a little old branch line. It went through Mecca. I think it went through Trimble also. It didn't go through Smithville.

In the peak of its service, the railroad scheduled several stops each day at the project area depots.

The train would come through of a morning. They would meet in Mecca, I will say it that way. Then (at) 4:00 that evening would be one. About 7:00 one of them would go back, and about 7:00 one would come back up (Ora May).

There use to be a train come to (Mecca) at 7:00 at night. One would go back towards Kansas City at 5:00 in the evening, then one would come or go to Kansas City at 8:00 in the morning; and one would come back from Kansas City at 10:00 in the morning. (They) had four passenger trains on that road then (Roy Bailey).

The train was, of course, steam operated. They had about four cars. It pulled about four cars. They run this road here, at the time it was running (around 1915), it had two passenger trains of a morning south and two passenger north of an evening the same way. Then (they had) freights all during the day (Virgil Bainbridge).

They was one train they called the 'accommodation train'. They had two passenger cars, and then they had freight ahead of it, and that was daily up and back. The trains generally went toward Kansas City about 7:00, that was the early one. That was the accommodation train, and the one coming back from Kansas City was generally about 9:30 in the morning. Going from Kansas City, this accommodation

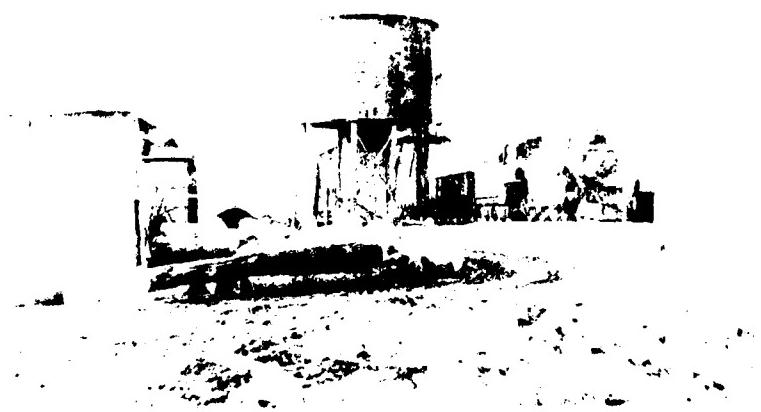


Figure 20.
Engine Number 5, OK Railroad. Courtesy
Smithville Historical Society.

train would generally get in about 7:30 or 8:00 of the evening. The other passenger train that would come from Milan, Osborn, up in there, it come down of the evening about 4:00 or 4:30 (Clyde Taylor).

Variation in engine type and number of cars depended on what type of service the train provided.

The passenger train hauled the mail. It was more express, it had the engine. What I remember on it mostly was a diesel engine. It wasn't a steam engine. It didn't have but three cars in it. The freights now, they all had steam engines (Shorty Harris).

Fewer cars were needed for trains which mainly transported people.

(There were) four on the passenger train. I saw a freight have as high as 57 cars on them coming up through there (Roy Bailey).

Shipping freight required more boxcars.

I suppose up through this hilly country, maybe it wasn't too big a train. Maybe there would be 40 to 50 cars on it, I don't know (Shorty Harris).

Not all the cars on the passenger trains were filled with travelers.

It would have four or five coaches on it. There would be two or three coaches you would ride in, and they had a coach for the mail and the cream and a lot of stuff (which) would come into a store. Sometimes you would send something on the train, (on the) baggage car they called it. The other cars most time was where the people rode (Ora May).

Residents relied on the train for numerous services. Many items were brought to the area by rail.

(At Mecca) there was a depot there for passengers to wait in, and then there was a car on the siding which we would wheel our eggs and cream out to this freight car, it looked like a freight car, to wait to be shipped out on the train. We shipped most everything by train in those days. There was a bakery in Plattsburg, and our bakery goods would come down on the train 4:30 of the evening, and the bread would still be warm when it was brought in. People would come around to get their fresh bread (Alta Martin).

Delivery and shipment of mail was dependent on the train.

We timed our work up here then; why, we timed our work by that 9:30 a.m. train. Each morning you had so much done. The train was directly related to the mail. Somebody would take it in his hack from the depot to the post office. When you heard the train, you knew about how long it would be before the mail got sorted. You could get your mail. The passenger train would go up in the morning (and) come

down at night. Well, when I first worked in the post office, we dispatched my mail that way. You could expect to get a letter from up north Gower, wherever it was, Plattsburg, where it was up north on the line. You'd expect to get the north mail coming in, which is just in contrast to now. Everything now goes to the big sorting centers. Regardless of what direction, it goes clear around Robin Hood's barn now. Some oldtimers still can't understand that (Marjorie Harris).

I suppose they sorted the mail on the cars; because, like if somebody from Trimble would send a letter to Smithville, well they would pick it up there and in just a few minutes they would drop it off at Smithville; so, I would suppose they would sort that mail (Shorty Harris).

Shipments out of the project area were also made by rail. You had pretty good connection with Kansas City then. All of our livestock was driven into Smithville and shipped by train to Kansas City. We'd drive them down there, and they had a stockyard there, and we'd load them out. They'd ship to Kansas City to market (Virgil Bainbridge).

At the time we moved in there (in 1924), we had a railroad going through Mecca, and we had a depot there, and we had a train through Mecca. A passenger train came through twice a day at that time. We also had freight trains that came through here, and we had cattle pens and granaries along the railroad tracks just west of Mecca, just a short ways. Many, many farmers shipped their hogs and cattle from this station; and, into the station, they would bring in car loads of corn and leave the train load of corn, car load of corn, at the side. The farmers would come down and unload their corn and haul it home (Evalyn Taylor).

Pleasurable as well as practical use was also made of the railroad in traveling. Most of the community rode on the train at one time or another. Children found train trips exciting and sometimes frightening.

The first ride I come to town on was with my mother on the train. I was just a little bitty kid, and I didn't want to get on there. I was scared. I was scared that thing would do something. She had an awful time trying to get me on the train. I was just about four years old (Roy Bailey).

The first time I ever rode a train to Kansas City, of course, I went with my dad. That was when he was running the mill. He was going over there to get some repairs for the engine, and he told me I could go with him. It was the wintertime. A day or two before we went, we was down here in Smithville, and there was an old fellow that run the general store down here, dry goods, and boots and groceries. We was in

there, and I seen a pair of leather boots, some old leather boots that come up to here. (They had) copper toes, that was something pretty important in themdays, copper toes. (They were) good to kick with. Well, we went to the city a day or two after I got the boots. It was cold weather and there was a snow on. My brother took up to Trimble on the sled to catch the train. We had to catch it at 7:00 that morning. Got up way before daylight that morning. Had to hook up and get ready and go to Trimble on the sled to catch the train. We caught that old Grand Island train, they was better than the OK. There was a conductor on there whose name was Dawson. My dad knew him pretty good, and I know he asked this conductor if he had to pay anything for me ariding. I was a pretty small kid. This old conductor, he was a joker, you know. Well, he says, 'it looks like if you can afford them boots, he ought to have a little money to pay his fare.' So that was the conversation going on down the train, you know, that was the first time I was ever on one. I was probably seven or eight. I think there was about four (cars). It seemed like there was a car or two behind us. I could look back through this door, and that car was just a weaving back and forth like that, and I thought it was going to turn over. I don't think it was going over 30 miles an hour, but that was awful fast for themdays (Reuben Ross).

I remember one of the first trips. I went down on what they call the OK Railroad here, which was a branch line of the Burlington. (It) went to Avondale they called it. That is just out of North Kansas City about two, three miles, and then you had to get off there. You would get on it at Mecca and then go to Avondale and then catch the Inter Urban to Excelsior Springs there on over to Seventh and Grand to the station there over town (Hugh Martin).

Rail travel usually required switching to a different train at some point.

This was the old CB&Q, Chicago, Burlington, Quincy. When we lived in Paradise, of course, at that time there was very few cars in the country. I would say by the time I was four or five years old, if we wanted to go over to Holt, we would come to Smithville and get on the train, go clear down here by Avondale, change trains, get on the Rock Island, go up through Kearney on up to Holt. I could walk it quicker now, than could have done all that. It was (a big deal) for me because I was a kid. A train ride was something then. I would still like to get behind one of those old steamers and get cinders in your eyes (Robin Lewis).

There were three railroads through Plattsburg at that time. The railroad that we took going down to Kansas City was called the OK. That was the railroad that went through Mecca, and it didn't go into the city. It stopped at Avondale at this side of the river, and then an Urban car would take us over to Kansas City (Don Breckenridge).

If we went to Kansas City to shop, or some sort of entertainment, we drove the horse and buggy six miles from Paradise to Smithville and left our horses at a livery stable and rode the OK Railroad to Avondale and changed to Urban to go from Avondale into Kansas City (to shop). We reversed our trip coming home. That was quite a treat to get to do then (Frances Orr).

The Urban line connected the trains with Kansas City. She talked about the Inter Urban. That's one of the electric cars (that) run from Kansas City to St. Joe and back, Kansas City to Excelsior Springs and back. I rode on those work trains. They had stations all along the line--Hoover Road, Curve, Ava, Fairview--places like that. They was for years you couldn't find a seat when you'd go to get on. They hauled a lot of freight, but they finally went broke and it's gone now. They had a trolley called the Daily Urban but actually it was an electrical line (Willard Payton).

The (Urban) cars looked like street cars, quite similar only heavier (Nannie Payton).

It went from Kansas City to St. Joe, and it was just a mile from the station, just a mile from where we lived. That is the way we went to Kansas City was on the train (Lucille Taylor).

At one time commuters filled the trains going to and from Kansas City.

That train wouldn't take too long to go into Kansas City. That train would be, when it come home at night, she'd be full; and some of them would be riding on the back. It would be that full, that many passengers on it. I know one time I came out there, and I had to ride on the back, set on the steps, to have a place to sit. It was that full (Virgil Bainbridge).

The large volume of merchandise and number of passengers arriving in Smithville necessitated transportation to and from the train station.

Well, you see themdays these salesmen, like grocery salesmen, shoe salesmen, and clothing salesmen, they all had to travel by train. That was before there was any cars. They traveled by train. They used to have a hack they called it. It took people up there to the depot. Well, . . . during several years, all of the merchandise of any and every kind was hauled from the depot by Clem Piburn, he run what they call a dray wagon. He hauled all the stuff to the stores (Willard Payton).

The cost of the trip to Avondale from Mecca "I think was between 50 and 75 cents" (Don Breckenridge). Connections between other cities in the area were also utilized.

I use to come to Plattsburg here back and forth (from Mecca). Especially in the wintertime, when the weather was bad, I would catch a train. (The fare was), I think, about 28 cents. I never did go any further than Trimble on the train. When the roads were bad I would catch a train to ride to Trimble. (I'd) go over there sometimes and buy a few groceries, walk back up the track to home. When the roads were bad, the only way you could get was to walk. I walked up there and carried a bunch of groceries up the track several times (Ora May).

Avoiding the purchase of a ticket provided entertainment for young people.

I was 16 when I first tried bumming a ride on the train. (We'd) wait till the old brakeman turned his head there and jump on and got in the car, went on to town here. Me and a boy jumped in (an empty boxcar) and rode on up here to town, walked back home. Didn't have enough money to go back on the passenger train, we had to walk back home. I walked from town here many a time, that ten miles. Had lots of fun then (Roy Bailey).

Walking along the tracks was also a common adventure; however, this type of activity had its hazards.

We walked to school over that railroad trestle and then when I got old enough I walked the tracks. The place was pretty wide on that one over the water, but we went home for lunch and everything. My first pair of high shoes, high-heel shoes, were lost down on the trestle over the road there. The engineer must have got a bit of a hoot out of that. We were playing on the trestle over the road, just on the other side. I guess he had been sitting there all the time taking on water (from) that water thing there by the track. He got ready to go, and he blasted away on that whistle, and that's where I ruined my first pair of hose, and I lost my first heel (Marjorie Harris).

Watching the trains arrive and depart was also a local pastime.

It used to be quite a thing to see the train go through Mecca back there. When I was a teenage boy, we use to come to Mecca a lot to come and see the train go through. Some people would get off, some would get on (Ora May).

Even after I got out of high school, and out of the university, one of our afternoon entertainments on Sunday would be to come up and see the train go out (Lucile Wright).



Figure 21.
Railroad Depot at Smithville, First Quarter
Century. Courtesy Lucille Taylor.

One of the busiest periods of railroad use was during the war. Large numbers of trains crossed through the area at that time.

In World War I, they routed the freights the closest way from Chicago to Kansas City. We had about 30 trains a day for a month or a month and a half on that little railroad (Clyde Taylor).

Eventually railroad usage declined. Tracks for the trains were removed from the area.

Now part of that road bed is used as a road for cars (Nannie Payton).

I think they tore the last of it up about '36 (Jesse Edwards).

The final run was taken by some of the local youngsters.

I can't remember what grade our class was in, but we decided our class wanted to ride the last passenger train that was going to be on the running through the town. So we all went down and bought tickets to Nashua, six miles south. Our whole class was going to be met by one of the classmate's father, Phyllis Breckenridge's dad, Elmo Breckenridge. He had the feed business at the east end of town right on the railroad tracks. He had a big coal truck, what we would call a two-ton truck, and it had side-boards on it. So he agreed to go down to Nashua and haul us all back to Smithville. We all loaded onto the train at Smithville and rode to Nashua. That was the last run. That was the last passenger run. Sometime in 1938 (Charlie Taylor).

Other means of transportation, particularly automobiles and trucks, attained the position of importance once held by the train.

I would presume (it closed because of) lack of business as far as travelling. This town used to get all its freight and all of its mail and all the produce was shipped out from here. I expect some trucks put it out of business as far as the need for transportation, and the farm trucks got more plentiful (Charlie Taylor).

While rail travel was still the predominant mode of transportation, the novelty of aviation was introduced to the area. A hot air balloon made an excursion through the project area; however, its performance, while amusing the local residents, did not make it a popular type of vehicle.

I know one time in the spring of the year . . . a fellow come in there and was going to up in a balloon. He was going to go up and parachute out. Of course, they had

that on a Saturday afternoon. They had it right down there, oh, right down from the flat there just a little east of the Methodist Church on the south side there. They had the balloon there, and . . . when they got it full of gas, of course, it raised up. The wind was blowing pretty strong, and it was blowing the balloon. So the wind blows strong enough, and they had some anchors out there to hold the balloon. I guess the balloon was rotten or something, and one of them ropes to hold it tore a hole in the balloon. Well that kind of squashed the deal. The feller kept putting the gas in it. They thought they could get enough gas, and the feller started up with it. Of course, it just got up a little ways, and the balloon didn't have enough gas to carry him up. So, it just took him up over the east part of town and just drug him through the trees. I think he finally landed in the tree. I didn't go up there, but I was there when he left on the balloon. He just got high enough to drag him over there and hit the trees. That ended the balloon (Virgil Bainbridge).

In the early days of the aviation age, airplanes were seen so infrequently that the sighting of one caused excitement.

When you'd hear an airplane, you'd run outside to look at it (Marjorie Harris).

Many people recalled the first time they saw an airplane.

I do recall the first time an airplane went over. Everybody stopped in their tracks and watched that dude from the time they could hear it till the time it was out of sight. Now, jets go over, and you don't even bother to look up (Buster Summers).

I can remember down there at Gordon's School one day, we heard a humming sound. The teacher went to the door and looked out and called all his children and dismissed school there for a few minutes. There were 17 Ford tri-motor planes went over in formation. We watched them as long as we could see them. They weren't going very fast. It looked fast in that day. I was probably along about 4th or 5th grade, I suppose, or 6th (Shorty Harris).

Early pilots made money giving people in rural areas their first plane rides.

A little old two wing, one-motor outfit lit out there south of town on Coleman Farmer's farm; and he took some riders, \$10 a ride. I didn't have the \$10. I didn't care about riding in it anyway. That was about 1919 (Eugene Arthur).

I don't remember the first airplane I ever saw, I remember the first ride I ever had in one. It was out here in a pasture northeast of town. An older gal, a friend of my

older sister (and I) took a ride together, it was \$5 apiece. My father didn't object, he thought it was all right. It would have been about '21 or '22 I expect. I just don't remember for sure. I know that one we flew in was probably held together with wrapping paper, nuts and bolts, no telling what. Anyway, we flew around Plattsburg in it (Irene Breckenridge).

I remember the first airplane that I ever rode in was an open cockpit plane. You could go down to the--what is now the--Municipal Airport and the Fairfax Airport both on Sunday afternoon. You could take a flight over Kansas City for \$2, and it was an open cockpit plane. I remember that, but I don't remember ever seeing an airplane in Smithville until (they were at) Douglas Airport (which) was taken there by the lake area (Frances Orr).

It seems not everyone was anxious to take his or her first flight.

The first airplane I ever got in was in Trimble. We and another boy, Ken Hawkins, we was going over there, and we was going to ride the airplane. They was charging \$5 to take you up for five minutes. So we went over there, just south of Trimble there; and the airplane come. That was when the airplanes was open, you know. So I give the man my \$5, and I was waiting for this other boy; and, after he got there, he got chicken and he wouldn't get in. So the man was running around there hunting somebody else to go up with me. I didn't take (the ride). Another fellow and a woman took it. I told the fellow that I wasn't going to ride if my buddy wasn't going to ride. I would have rode if he would have rode. He got to chicken out at first, and then I got to thinking about it that the thing might fall. So, I got out of there. Me and him walked over there to Trimble. We fooled around there, and then we walked on down there to the south of Smithville to the Wright farm. We walked down there that evening. We got down there and got to playing cards and things, and I lost my \$5. That was in 1919. That was when the first airplane come out. Well, they had been out, but that was the first one coming through the country (Roy Bailey).

Some passengers not only enjoyed the ride but wanted to make careers out of flying.

I had it in mind to become an aviator before Lindberg flew across the Atlantic in 1926. Lindberg flew across in 1927, and it was a year or two before. I got a crazy idea. I always did like to take a risk, and I like to drive fast and all that kind of thing. An old barnstorming pilot came up from Turney. His name was Wayne Newton, and he had a little old plane--a bi-plane, canvas, and bailing wire, and taking people (for) rides. This was several years after Irene took her ride. He took me (for) a ride, and I asked him when we got down if he couldn't do some stunts, the loop-to-loop, and do a little extra stuff to give these people a thrill. He said, 'Yes, if you want to pay for it.' I said, 'I think I can pay for it, if

you will just do it.' He did everything that old crate would do. He even lost the tools out of it. I was just having the time of my life. After that, well, he wanted to sell it to me. If dad would have let me have the money, I would have bought it; but he wouldn't, of course (Don Breckenridge).

Besides allowing local people to have their first airborn experience, some pilots provided extra entertainment.

The parachute jump, that was a big deal. (It was) 1928, '29, '30, somewhere along in there. My cousin and I rode horses for six miles to see that guy jump out of an airplane. That was a big deal. Well, he would (also) take people for rides. I don't know what he charged, but a few people took a ride. There was a lot of people there, there was a big crowd (Shorty Harris).

One aviator exploited the Chautauqua to sell rides on his plane.

A fellow out of Kansas City got hooked onto that. Of course, you wouldn't see an airplane once in six months, but he found out about this Chautauqua, and he had a little old regular wreck now, just a little open cockpit plane, you know. Well, he got to coming out here when this Chautauqua was going on, and he would fly over the Plattsburg Chautauqua grounds. Of course, everybody stopped to look at the airplane then. Well, he would go on about two miles north to Plattsburg, and there was a big blue grass pasture up there. (He) would land, and about half the crowd would leave the Chautauqua and take out up there. They wanted to see that plane. His idea was to take up passengers, \$2.50 apiece. (This was in the) late teens I would say. Me and a friend of mine went up there in a Model T roadster. Well, we took out to see this plane, too, didn't think nothing about riding on it at all, kind of scared of it. The people got up there, and they all gathered around, and this pilot he was ready for business. Them that would ride it didn't have any money. Them that had the money was afraid to ride it. He had a hard time getting any business started. He finally got out a board . . . (that) had a wheelymajig in the middle of it and give it a whirl and had ten numbers on there. You could get a number for 50 cents, and when he sold ten numbers, that was \$5, that was the trip. Well, of course, people would take a number for 50 cents, because I wanted to see it go up, and I guess others did, too. Well, me and this boy I was with, well, we both took a number. When he got ten of them sold, he give it a whirl, and I was about the first one that got a ride. I really didn't want it. He give it another whirl, and this other boy got it. We both got it. We both got a ride for 50 cents apiece. I didn't know whether to hardly go then

or not. I didn't want to back out right there in front of them. We went on. It was an old plane. Two passengers set up, and the pilot set back of you. We got in, and it was just open, you know. You couldn't hear nothing for that motor right there in front of you. He opened her up, and I made up my mind I wasn't going to look down. I thought if I looked down, I would go to getting scared. He had an eye for business. He would fly down over the Chautauqua, and it would get more people interested. He would go on down three, four miles south of Plattsburg and make a circle, come back over the Chautauqua and then he would go up there and land. What happened about that deal was, they was having a ball game that Sunday, down south of the Chautauqua grounds, baseball game. I made up my mind I wasn't going to look down because I was afraid I would get scared. He went on down south of the baseball game, and I looked down and could see they was playing ball, and I wished I was down there. (We) went on down, circled around, and come back over the game; and still I wasn't agoing to look down. The other boy wasn't either I guess; but (the pilot) cocked it up that away and (said), 'See that ballgame'? He tipped us up, so we could see the game. Well, we seen it, but that wasn't the worse of it. He wanted to put on another show. We went on up north of the crowd on the blue grass pasture and circled around and was acoming back down, and I thought we was going to land. We circled around and was heading down toward the crowd, and he reached over and tapped me on the shoulder and said something. I didn't know what he said. What I was wanting to do was get on down there and land. He said something, and I nodded my head 'yes', you know. So went on a little ways, and pretty soon the engine commenced coughing, spitting, and sputtering, and it turned up that away, took a nose dive. He had asked me if we wanted to do a loop-to-loop, but I didn't know what he said and nodded my head 'yes'. Well, he give us a loop-to-loop. That was putting a show on for them down on the ground. After that, of course, he settled down and landed. I was ready to get out and stay out. But I have rode them since then. I wouldn't hardly think he would have done it, but he did. He gave us a loop-to-loop (Reuben Ross).

The first airmail from Smithville met an interesting fate. I can remember when the first airplane come in to Smithville. I can't think what year that was; but anyhow, they was going to carry the mail from Smithville to Kansas City in the thing. They had it over there at the race track, they got it all ready to go. I guess the propeller on it - I was told this - the company had put on a new propeller. It cracked, so when he got ready to take off, why he started down in front of the grandstand, got around in front of the grandstand, pieces of that propeller flew off and went up in the grandstand. He didn't go very far until it just

nosed right down and wrecked the whole thing. So they didn't get any mail carried from Kansas City to Smithville. That ruined the deal (Virgil Bainbridge).

Although trains and airplanes affected public transportation, creation of the internal combustion engine to power automobiles was a more significant development. The change in private travel which was brought about with the introduction of cars to the area had a major impact on the lives of everyone in the project zone.

Like planes, early automobiles were fascinating to see and hear.

There was a doctor in Dearborn that had one. I believe that was Doc Moore. I think maybe a one or two cylinder outfit. It would throw out a lot of popping. You would run to the door to see it every time you heard it coming (Eugene Arthur).

Several people could recall the first automobile they saw.

I saw an electric car in Colorado that looked more like a buggy with just one rod or something to guide it with. Then an old doctor had an old Brush car, and I don't know which one I saw first (Hugh Martin).

I was going to school at this Horn School, and this car come over the hill just west of the school house. Of course, we was out on the school ground playing. It had the high wheels, oh, about (three feet) high. It was just solid rubber tires. You don't have no tires like that now days. And that thing was running, (it) sounded like it had about a 270 engine, maybe one, I don't know. But that was the first automobile I ever saw (Claud Porter).

First car I saw was (with) an old soda pop man. He had an old car, and the hind wheels run on sprockets. They had chains. As the sprocket come through here from the engine, the engine turned on a little slide under there, and then that sprocket turned that sprocket, and that sprocket turned back there on chains just like a wagon buggy wheel. That is the way it pulled. It was back there before Ford started making cars. Maxwell or whatever it was then. It came to Mecca selling soda pop. He come up there one day in the rain. The tires then were just hard tires, there wasn't no rubber tires. He couldn't get the thing to go. He started back out, and them old roads were all muddy then. Shoot, that thing just got out there and started spinning. He had to stay all night till it dried up before he could get it back on. He stayed there in Mecca at the store with them. The sun come out the next day and dried it up, and he could stop spinning,

and then he went on. He had too much load on there to go then (Roy Bailey).

Sightings of cars were not only unusual but at first were sometimes frightening.

(The first car I saw was) between Mecca and Plattsburg. It was making so much noise it would scare us to death. Most horses had never seen a car, a popping and a crack-ing and agoing on, they made quite a bit of noise then, the old two cylinders (Ora May).

Riding in motor vehicles could be as alarming as seeing them.

My father bought the first (car) he had in 1914. I was scared half to death. As I said, I was a scaredy cat when I was a kid. I would ride in the car with my eyes shut. When we come to a bridge or something, I didn't think we would get across it (Irene Breckenridge).

Horses were especially terrified of cars.

We had one old buggy horse, he sure dreaded to meet an automobile. Somebody had to get out and lead him by, great big horse. He didn't like them at all (Eugene Arthur).

The horse I rode, he would scare of an automobile setting still a lot worse than one that was running. If one was setting still by the side of the road, he'd take a wide circle to get around there. One evening me and another boy was going into Smithville. Going up we just had the lap robe pulled up over our laps about like that, and there was one of them little old . . . Brush Automobiles. They had a little old car, I think the name of it was Brush. Well, it was broke down out just between Montrose Cemetery and town. We went to go around that thing, and I knew what he would do, he'd shy off from it when he went around it. When he got up even with it, he wanted to get away from there. I was holding a pretty tight line on him; and when he made his lunge to get on by there, one of my lines popped in two up at the collar strap. I hollered at those boys (that) they better jump, because I figured he'd tear that buggy all to pieces. I thought he was gone. I throwed that lap robe, and I didn't get off my feet. I went out right over the front wheel on my shoulders. I hollered, 'Whoa.' That horse stopped right beside that automobile and did not move another peg. I got up and tied a knot in the line and drove it on into Smithville. I told some of them then, 'That horse wouldn't run off. He knew something happened. He stopped right there and waited for me to get up and tie a knot in that line' (Claud Porter).

Nearly all the population, both human and equine, was aware of the first car that came to Smithville.

I remember the first automobile that come to Smithville. There was a man by the name of Thatcher out here that had this car. It was a 1904 or '05 Cadillac. The reason I remember it very well is because my father had a team of pharoah mares. That is what we commonly called glass-eyed. They had clear blue eyes. They had mahogony bays with white faces. They was a beautiful harness team. We had a carriage. We came to town. This carriage had coal oil lamps on the side. We also had a coal oil dashboard light that throwed a little light down between the horses. My father and I would come to town, and we went to the bank. There was a hitch rack where people would angle in the hitch rack and tie the horses, like people angles in their car now; and this hitch rack was north of the bank of Smithville. There is an antique shop there, but it was here in Smithville in the bank building. This hitch rack ran down where (the) drugstore is now, it run from the corner. There was an old building there on the corner. We come out of the bank and started to cross the street, and there was horses tied all along this hitch rack, and we heard this racket. It was Mr. Thatcher had decided to come to town. He come around this hitch rack, or around this corner facing the hitch rack that the horses was tied on to. One of them looked around and seen that car, and they just cleaned that hitch rack. They took off, and one of these mares went home the six miles. When she got home all that was left on her was the collar. The other one got hung up in the hedge fence out here, and we caught her and rode her home, Dad and I did. I don't know how much damage was done. People got kind of upset. They said, 'Well we ought to hang the man.' If (anyone) had walked out on the street at that time, while all this commotion was going on (and) said, 'Well, we don't think nothing about it, the man was just driving around.' If someone would have said, at that time, they would have been landing on the moon in 75 years, they would have grabbed him up and took him to St. Joe to commit him, because they knew he was crazy. One would have had to been to make a statement like that at that time. They kept that car for years -- the last time I saw that car, a man by the name of George Young had it up in Plattsburg. It was still running -- this man Thatcher that had it refused a brand new Cadillac car years after that for it. The old man and old lady died, and they sold their car. At one time he could have had a brand new Cadillac car for that because they wanted it for show rooms. I didn't know too much about it (then) because we were chasing horses. My goodness they tore up all the harness, and they broke the buggy tongues and shaves and all of that kind of stuff. Across from (where the) drugstore is now, there was a big warehouse. Well, under the Odd Fellow building, where city hall is now, under this hall was a man by the name of John Bett

(who) made harness. Him and his two boys had to work nearly all night. The ones that could catch their horses, they would get their rig repaired and their harness repaired, they went home. That man caused \$500 damage to all these rigs. You know there would be that much damage now to a fender of an automobile. It finally wore off, and nobody paid much attention. The only thing is, people would watch if he would come to town. They wouldn't drive their horses, because the horses were scared to death of it. You take now the horses that grew up here around in the country, they see cars every day and they don't pay any attention (Jesse Edwards).

Although the automobile market began slowly, residents of Smithville and nearby towns began to purchase horseless carriages, and cars became more familiar items in the area.

It was probably 1907 or '08 before there was any more cars around (Smithville). There just wasn't very many cars. I think this Walter Williams that had this warehouse got the first Model T's. There wasn't very many people that had them. You couldn't get over one or two a year, maybe. Different ones would have to put in an order for them and all (Jesse Edwards).

There was very few cars around when I was a kid. You wouldn't find a half dozen cars here in Smithville (Robin Lewis).

Features of family cars were remembered by some owners of early automobiles.

We had an Overland Right-Hand Drive, which had prestol lights, and what they called the old 'H' gear shift. (The light) was just like carbide. It was in the tank on the running board. Of course, you had to light them. I think that was the first one we had. I think it was '18 or '19 somewhere along in there (Hugh Martin).

The first automobile that my dad bought was in 1919. So, I was past 19 years old. That first car was a Model T. It had a mohair top. My father bought it new here. He gave \$465 for it (Jesse Edwards).

Originally car dealers had to provide special services as their customers were inexperienced with their purchases.

In 1916 we went to Kansas City on the train. I went with my dad and bought a car over there in Kansas City. I can't think just where it was. Anyway we went there, and it was a Mentz car. They went to California to the World's Fair, and he saw it out there, and he thought that was a pretty good car. So, we went over there and bought one.

We couldn't even drive it home. The fellow that sold it to us furnished a man to drive it home. When we come out of Kansas City there, after we crossed the ASB Bridge, (there was) an old dirt road clear to Smithville. We didn't know the way to Smithville (to take). The first car we brought out. So we finally made it to Smithville. Of course, after we got (used to) driving the car, we made trips to Kansas City, and we'd drive the car. Eventually, it wasn't long until they paved the road from Kansas City out to Smithville. The road they put through up here, it was built in 1921 (Virgil Bainbridge).

Having a first car brought with it the possibility of another new experience, a first automobile accident.

Two old buddies of mine and I decided that we would go down to Kansas City to the automobile races, I think the Memorial Day Races. Dad happened not to be at home, he happened to be at the farm, I guess. That is the way I recall it. I didn't have to ask him for the car, anyhow. We got in (his Buick) and took off. On the way through Kansas City we had an accident, and the car was pretty badly smashed up, and the other car turned over and injured some people in the middle of the intersection. So we had quite a time over that. They sued me. I was too ignorant, or not too well informed, as to who had the right of way at that time. (There were) no stop signs, and traffic laws weren't very clearly spelled out. I was sued, and dad said, 'now you got into that, you are going to get out of it yourself.' He washed his hands of it. He didn't even go down to Kansas City when the case come up in Jackson County Court, Division No. 2, Judge Lucas presiding. It turned out that they didn't have any case. We weren't drinking or nothing, anything like that at all. Well, (the other driver) was speeding, so the judge threw the case out of court before it went to the jury. They had a jury impaneled, it was going to be a jury trial. That was 1919. They just simply threw it out of court. I never did hear any more from it. We were relieved completely. Daddy's first car was a Wenton 6. My older brothers drove it, I was never old enough to drive it. My dad never mentioned that to me after that was settled. I never recall him ever bringing the subject up. Of course, I lost the value of the car, it belonged to him. As I recall we had very little automobile insurance, in those days, well at least around here (Don Breckenridge).

Eventually the automobile became a common sight in the project area.

About the time the war was over, (when) the boys began to come back, they would get these old vehicles, old army stuff. You would see a lot of that stuff around (Robin Lewis).

Not only was transportation affected by the increased number of motor vehicles. The social life of the community, which had been predominantly locally oriented, began to include more activities outside the area.

It seemed like when the cars in, the people used a different way of circumstance. They wouldn't have these house parties. They seem like that stopped. Then we went in, of course, we had shows, and we'd go to entertainment like that. A lot of people would go to shows. They'd go to the Burkes in Kansas City and things like that (Virgil Bainbridge).

As cars became more available to people, more people went to the city to shop (Lucille Taylor).

Automobiles affected personal travel; however, motor vehicles also provided a new type of public transportation.

Busses use to run from Smithville to St. Joe three, four times a day. If you wanted a bus all you had to do was be out on the road. When he came by (you'd) flag him down; and he would stop and pick you up and take you wherever you wanted to go for some kind of a fee. I don't recall any of that. Then of course transportation got different. I still think there is a bus or two that goes from St. Joe to Kansas City (Buster Summers).

As traffic began to increase and to change from horse-drawn to gasoline powered, a need for better roads with harder surfaces was felt in the project area. The early county dirt roads were maintained by overseers.

The county use to have road overseers, that was just different farmers over the country, and they had a horse grader. They would put four to six horses once a year on the roads and grade them and just pull a lot of grass and weeds up in the road. Well, there wasn't many cars, nothing but buggies and stuff. In fact, there was pretty poor roads, awful poor (Reuben Ross).

Mechanical equipment was provided for the two-man road crews in later years.

(At one time) there was only three (overseers) in the county. The year before (my father) went on, there was only two in the county. I think (he started) about '26 or '27 along in '25 or '26. He had a caterpillar and a grader. My dad was a grader man and road overseer. (The) caterpillar man run the caterpillar, which was an old broken tractor, ten-ton hold. I just worked for them as (a) helper. I would run the grader part of the time and run the caterpillar once in awhile, not very often (Hugh Martin).

Originally the overseer had responsibility for a large area.

When we first started in, we had over 200 miles of road and operated from half a mile west of Mecca clear across to the county line east and then about a mile and a half along on the south, just almost 22 miles across there. They put on another rig later, and my dad operated from a half mile west of Mecca and then north from Trimble and Gower and up in there (Hugh Martin).

New equipment and additional personnel were brought in later.

There was a new county court elected in '24, and they done away with all these old road overseers. They bought four International tractors. 1930's, and four 'planers', they called them in those days. It was an outfit that had four blades on them and about four levers you handled these blades with. The blade out on the ditch, you could lower it (to) open up a little ditch and plane the road down half of it (at a time). You would have to make a round. We run this International tractor and planer four years. They wasn't too good either. They were a lot better than what we did have. At that same time they bought two big cat tractors, caterpillar tractors--60's-- and two graders. (There was) one on each side of the county, each one had half of the county. Them big graders was suppose to go and open where they had heavy brush and stuff. They would do the heavy grading; and, with the planers you would do lighter work. We run that planer four years, and the tractors pretty well wore out. They got rid of the planer and the old International tractors, and they bought us four little cat tractors and (a) small grader. We run them three, four years. Along about '33, they put me and my partner on these big graders; and we worked all over the county, all over half of it. We would just go around and open up new roads (Reuben Ross).

Along with more advanced equipment came different materials for construction of roads. Major thoroughfares were asphalted.

This blacktop here, they built that in 1921. That was the first paved road we had (Virgil Bainbridge).

This old blacktop that comes in down off the hill here, Commercial Street, and then wound up out by the old fair-ground, that was put in '24, '25, '26, along in there. That used to be No. 1 Highway in Missouri. They was working on the road, paving that road on out by the fair-grounds, right on that corner, (and) I believe we got our Model T just a few days before that. I remember we came in to town for something and went back up around that way back into Paradise. They were still working on the road; but part of it was paved, part of it was still under construction. That was about '24 or '25 something like that (Robin Lewis).

County roads were surfaced with other materials.

They started that in the late '30's, when Mr. Roosevelt went in, that was when we started to get some gravel roads. About two-thirds of the people when Roosevelt went in was pretty near starvation. Every bank in the country was pretty near closed. The Republicans had been in for 12 years. It started with Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover; and Roosevelt was elected in '32. He started up a little deal giving people two days of work. They could work two days and make \$6. They had rock quarries around the country. They would work in that quarry, and they would haul a few rock out and put on the road. That was the first of the rock road. That was say '34 or '35; and from then on, they just kept on getting better (Reuben Ross).

While developments in transportation was affording new opportunities for travel, technology was also revolutionizing homes. The radio brought a new type of entertainment to the project area.

I sort of remember about the first radios. An old man down here in an old place called 'Lilly' had one of the first radios, earphone radios. Just lots of people went down there and listened off those old crystal sets. There was always just this one little store, this old gentleman had a store down there, a little cross road between Paradise and up this way. I think there is still a family that runs the store down there. He was one of those sort of pioneers. (His name was) Jasper Hawkins. He had the first crystal set that I know of in this part of the country at all. People went down there, and then more of them began to get them around here. Before that, we had Victrolas and Edisons, music boxes (Irene Breckenridge).

Before the radio became a common household item, Smithville residents could tap in to a system operated in town.

Mr. Reever, who had the shoe shop, had a radio; and then, for a little bit a month, you could rent a speaker. When we lived out there by the cemetery and the river, we had that speaker. I guess it was wired from the town there. Whatever station he chose, that's what you listened to, just one station. We didn't talk any more, we had to be in bed and be still. Amos and Andy came on at 8:00 (Marjorie Harris).

He had his radio in his shop, and he'd send out the program out around the country, oh, for about a mile or so. He got several people who hooked up to the thing. (They paid) about a quarter a month or something. A quarter of a dollar was a lot of money, you know. (You could turn the speaker) on and off, but you couldn't control (the station) (Shorty Harris).

Around the turn of the century communication between members of the community was altered by the introduction of the telephone. Neighbors could always be aware of the local news via the phone.

They had what they called party lines. Them phones was the ones you crank. There was about 10 or 12 on each telephone line. Everybody in the whole country knew everybody else's business, because if you got a telephone call and went and took down the receiver, why there was click, click, click, click. The receivers were just coming down, they wanted to hear. Oh, them party lines, you just (as) well published it in the paper (Willard Payton).

Modern conveniences for power and water brought new comforts to homes. Cities like Smithville had electricity at night from an early date.

My playground, when I was seven and eight years old (in 1909 to 1910), was the mill, the river, and down the street a block in the other direction was the light plant. The engineer at the light plant would let me come (watch). They started the plant at 5:00 in the evening and run until midnight (Jim Justus).

Creation of the Rural Electric Administration brought electricity to the farmlands at a much later time.

Another thing that happened along about the same time was REA. Roosevelt was in back of that. People out in the country didn't hardly know what electricity was till the got REA, and that was another fine thing. I know it started under his administration, started in the late '30's. Of course it was still going. This was the first we had electricity. It was '52 when we got it out there on the farm. It was within half mile of us. Now they had electricity; and I don't know how many times I talked to this light man down here, you know, about getting it over to our house. He would always talk favorable. He said just as quick as they tore out an old line somewhere and had some extra poles and stuff, they would run a line that half mile over to us. They never would have done it, he was just talking. During the time we was wanting this electricity, one night, the phone rang. We was eating supper, I think, and some fellow wanted to talk to me. So I went to the phone. He asked me, says, 'Would you all like to have electricity?' I says, 'Well, yes.' It was a fellow over here in Platte County working for the REA. The REA had done come down to the Trimble Lake up there. We was just across the road south from Trimble Lake across the creek. The house right down below us, of course, had never had any electricity; and (neither had) the one on down the road, the three houses there. He says, 'If you get the other two houses to agree to take electricity, we will run it over there.' I told him I would see about that.

So, the next morning, I went to see this fellow that owned the house down below us. He didn't live there, he lived in another house. I went down to see him; and of course, he hum-hawed around to start with. (He) said he didn't know that he needed it. His wife up and told him that he did need it and he knew it, too. Then he agreed to take it; and then, of course, the other party on down the road wanted it just as bad as we did. So we called (REA) up and told them we had them. We went to wiring the house, and it wasn't no time that they run the line over there, in '52. We have had electricity ever since. It was good service too. The electricity was never off too long. I had a coon to climb up on the light pole and got into the transformer. That would kill them right now, you know, and that cut it off. Then I think one time there was a squirrel got up there, and that cut it off, burned a fuse out or something I guess (Reuben Ross).

The first central water supply for Smithville consisted of a community well.

I remember when the old well was out here in the middle of the street, the old water well. The business places around town would get water there, and they had watering troughs for the horses (Robin Lewis).

A long time ago, now that's when the streets were dirt streets and, of course, there was no cars, there was a well right square in the middle then. I guess they filled it up after they got water. It had an iron railing around it and wooden troughs on the outside where you could water your horse. They couldn't hitch them there, they had hitch racks up and down the streets; but they would water the horses there (Willard Payton).

Running water replaced the need for the town well. The first system had a stand-by water pump.

The old Patterson Mill . . . was rebuilt several times. The floods would tear it out, but they used that for their water supply in town and kept it there as back-up for the water pump, which was right north of the river. The old water plant was on the site of where the housing unit is over there now. They had a pump that pumped out of that water supply (Charlie Taylor).

Government funds, through the Urban Renewal program, were utilized to replace the original water system in Smithville.

They had a water system that was put in Smithville in about 1925. One of the most serious problems was that most of the town of Smithville was on the south side of the river. The water treatment plant was on the north

side of the river, and there was only one water main coming across from the north to the south side where most of the people lived. That main was put in in 1925, when the original system was built; and it also went under the river. There was always a question (of) how soon it was going to break. One of the first things they spent money for in the Urban Renewal program, I put the second water line across from the water plant to the south of the river. That was the first money that was spent, because to me that was the most critical. I extended the main on up and tied it in . . . and stubbed it off, for future expansion that I was sure would happen, to run water on up to the hospital and up there. The city of Smithville employed a consulting engineer afterwards. In fact in the last year, the city called me one day and wanted me to come down and talk with the engineer. They wanted to receive most of the facts of what happened in the past and along down Commercial Street; and I went down and talked with them. I said, 'What is your project, what are you trying to do?' 'Well, we are going to put a 12-inch water main down Commercial.' 'I'll show you and answer your questions, but you aren't going to put one down there, because you've already got an 8-inch line. It is already stubbed out to go up the hill.' They didn't even know. Also, where they put the water tower, I layed out the water line and located (it) where I considered the water tower should be, you can see it today. It was stubbed out, so all you had to do with the water tower was hook to the valve and turn the valve on. That was all done. The irony of that was the consulting engineer in some other city, they hunted every where else around the community and the town for (where) to put a water tower before they finally went back and put it where it was planned to be and where it was all set up (Jim Justus).

Urban Renewal appropriations were also utilized to make other facilities better in Smithville.

All the curb, gutters, and streets you see now was put in with the Urban Renewal. (Before) there was nothing but ditches and oil streets except for this main highway (Charlie Taylor).

Obtaining funds for the town required aggressive action.

After '65 I thought there ought to be some way we could get some Urban Renewal money. (There was) plenty of it then; and with the aid of the citizens of Smithville and the mayor, we were able to get approval of an Urban Renewal Program. We got it established, and then they ran into difficulties. The other directors did not continue. The mayor and the city asked me if I could do what I could. So, I left my farm here. At one point the Urban Renewal authorities of Fort Worth requested the mayor and city officials to come to Fort Worth on the subject. The meeting was (for) cancellation of the Urban Renewal project.

I don't know, (with) my persistence and being a little cussed, I guess, I was able to get support from Senator Eagleton's office in Washington and Senator Symington's office; and we got the Urban Renewal program reinstated and completed. It brought us \$6 million to Smithville (Jim Justus).

Various changes were made with the money allotted to Smithville.

The program was first set up mostly to do things above ground, beautification. It was my responsibility to get it reinstated and put programs through. I only picked out portions of the program that would result in lasting improvements. Of course, you were forced to do some of the things. I won't say forced, I will say required to do some of the things that may be a little more upsetting than usual. I tried to reduce them to a minimum. So, we put in streets, water mains, storm drains, and things you can't see. There was one church that had a 40 foot street on two sides, and the other two churches had a 26 foot street. I got approval and rearranged the program to put in a 40 foot street by each church in town. Of course, I had a little bit of problems, I put one street that didn't directly agree with the denomination, one person objected. Nevertheless, that was one of the things. In the whole program, I put in what was considered permanent improvements. A person not long ago said that they knew there had been Urban Renewal in Smithville, but they couldn't see it. That was a person that was being a little critical, see. I said, 'Well, you got the streets. You can see them, but you can't see the underground water mains. You can't see the storm drainage, but you don't see the water in the streets either.' The situation in Smithville was, that when you were at the high school and had extreme rain, you couldn't get out of town. The water impounded on the streets, you couldn't get through. There is none of that now (Jim Justus).

Life styles in the Smithville Lake region had been vastly altered by modern technology. Area residents have witnessed changes in nearly every aspect of their lives. Advancements which brought new forms of entertainment, ease of working conditions, better transportation, and comforts to homes have been gained at a cost. Many of the projects which once drew the community together are events of the past. As the area has become better connected to other places, some of the relations within the community have been lost.

THE SMITHVILLE DAM AND RESERVOIR

Given the periodic flooding of the Little Platte River, water control was frequently a topic of conversation in the project area.

The first time I heard of the dam was about 1932 or '33, a few years after the 1929 flood. They made some hay west of Paradise; and then we didn't hear any more of it until, oh, long about 1947 or '48. They began to talk about it again, you know. It seems like every time they had a flood, you'd hear something about the dam. You kinda get used to that kind of talk and don't think much about it after awhile. Just in the neighborhood, you'd talk to the neighbors and things. They'd have maybe a town meeting and talk about flood control or something, you know, and they'd do a little work. One time they straightened the river. That was in the early 1950's I believe. Thought they would let some of the water through a little faster (Shorty Harris).

One group of citizens initiated action which eventually led to the establishment of the Smithville Dam and Lake project. Jim Justus, who has been an active participant in the Platte River Flood Control Association since its organization, described the work which was necessary to bring a federally funded program to the area:

The beginning of the effort to get some relief on flooding of the Platte River was begun in 1961. Five men met in Platte City and went to the organization (at) Kansas City which at that time was sponsoring water projects in the Missouri and Kansas areas. The five men were Mr. Leonard Hoe, Mr. Charles Niehart, Mr. Cyrus Kline and his son Charles, and myself, Jim Justus. We contacted Mr. Lou Paramore, Executive Director of the MOARK Association. MOARK had been formed in 1951 after the disastrous flood in Kansas City; and with the aid of influential people in Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri, they had sponsored water projects in the state of Kansas, like Tuttle Creek and others, and also the Truman Reservoir and Dam which started out to be Baysinger. The five individuals, we met with Mr. Paramore, and he arranged the interview and meeting with Col. Andy Rollins who was the District Engineer of the Kansas City Corps. We had

the meeting with Col. Rollins and explained our problems on the Platte River. The subject of the flooding on the Platte River was not particularly new because there had been studies back as far as 1925 to do something on the river. The flooding on the Platte River has been very damaging and disastrous in my memory, which started in 1908 and '9, because I used to play on the bank of the river. Col. Rollins and his staff were impressed by our visit and explanation of our desire to accomplish some type of flood control or correction of these damaging disastrous floods on the Platte which occurred as long as anyone could remember. Mr. Paramore then gave us suggestions as to how we should proceed for getting something accomplished. It is not generally understood to the public that the Corps (of Engineers) does not initiate water projects. They have to be initiated by civilian groups. So, therefore, we went to Washington D. C. before the House and Senate Finance Committee in 1962 or 1961 to ask for some funds for study on the Platte River. The funds were to be in the 1962 budget, fiscal year; and, by support from individuals from Kansas City and through Senator Symington's office and his aide, Stanley Fike, our request was favorably received. The House and Senate Finance Committee appropriated \$10,000 for the study. With that success, we made a trip to Washington each year before the House Finance Committee seeking additional funds. Whether our efforts were required, I never understood particularly. Nevertheless, that was the procedure carried out to get public works or water projects. So we appeared before the committees and Congress each year, and up to 1964 received sufficient appropriations each year to meet the needs of the Corps of Engineers so they could continue their planning. In 1965, the spring of 1965, the advance planning on the Platte River was sufficiently developed by the Corps in Kansas City that the projects could be in an omnibus bill for authorization. All the work the Corps had accomplished and all the reports of the various agencies involved were all satisfactory, and we were pushing a deadline to get the authorization bill up for authorization in Congress. There were a few problems. One that was delaying and creating some difficulty was getting the approval of the State of Missouri, but it was finally accomplished; and we got it to Washington to the Corps of Engineers. Everything was in order and the authorization for the Smithville Lake, that also included channel work on the Big Platte River, and also some channel work on the Little Platte, was in this authorization bill. That bill was up for authorization and all the work completed by June of 1965. By fate or coincidence, on July 20, 1965, we had the most disastrous flood on the Little Platte River that has occurred in my memory or anyone's for that matter. After the flood in 1965, we appeared before Congress, because it was a late hearing year, to request planned acquisition of construction. The year that you are up for authorization you can obtain no funds.

So, we had to go the year of authorization in 1965 asking funds for the following year, and the chairman of the committee, I don't know whether it was the House or the Senate, they said that they were quite aware of our need of protection, but he didn't think it was necessary that we put on such a demonstration to prove our point. That was the 1965 flood. After our authorization in 1965, it was generally conceived by the people in the area around that immediately Congress authorized construction of an impoundment for the protection of Smithville because we had the 1965 flood. Most people do not understand the procedure that is necessary to obtain a water project. The authorization was passed after the 1965 flood occurred; but if the prior work and efforts by the Platte River Flood Control Association hadn't been (done), it would not have been possible to have put an authorization bill in for flooding in 1965 after the flood occurred. It was the prior work that had been accomplished that made it possible to get the authorization in 1965. Since the authorization, we have obtained funds every year. We have never missed a year that we didn't get some funds. All authorization means is that you're licensed to seek funds for construction. This gives you the authority to ask for money, gives you the authority to beg. Funds on the waterfront have to be obtained every year. They are not ongoing when the authorization is, no money goes with the authorization. There are projects authorized that never receive any funds. Our organization here set up as the Platte River Flood Control Association, has many memberships (for) which we ask ten dollars a year. I have written an annual report to the membership and with that send out, in most cases a stamped envelope, because stamps come too high. We ask them to contribute \$13.00 now. The total membership is probably between six and seven hundred individuals and we have had approximately an annual income of \$1500 from 150 individuals. Some new ones would come in and others drop out. To begin with, people of Smithville were not supporting, in fact if anything they were in opposition. There were stories circulated that they were going to build a dam in the middle of the town and below the town. The town would be relocated, destroyed; and all these unfounded rumors were given out. Now the sponsorship and most of the people in the Platte River Flood Control Association were farmers of Buchanan County, Platte County, some in Clay County, and some in Clinton County. This authorization did not just cover Smithville. It covered the Big Platte which is down over on the west of us. The Little Platte is a small tributary of the Big Platte. What we are trying to establish here is that this development did not start out as a lake for Smithville. It started out as flood control on the Platte River. Now when we got the study money for the Corps, they made a comprehensive study of the Platte River, not only the Big Platte, the Little Platte and the other tributaries. There is another stream or two, you see, it runs all the way up into Maryville and up in there.

They studied the possibility of empoundments of various locations. I think they figured six possible locations. On a flood project, it must have a cost-benefit ratio exceeding one. The benefit has to exceed the cost more than one. Now when they figured the economic CB on the other projects, the other empoundment possibilities, there was only one that had a satisfactory cost-benefit ratio, and that was the one in Smithville. You figure so much damage to Smithville, so much agricultural protection, and water supply and all the other various things, the recreation, of course recreation was a big factor because this is what they call a multi-purpose reservoir. Smithville was the only one that qualified as a possible empoundment. So that is the only one out of the study that received any attention. The authorization did not cover any other project except Smithville and channel improvement on the Little and Big Platte. Of the first group who contributed their money, there was only one citizen in Smithville, Mr. Leon Morton was the only one in Smithville that contributed when we first sought our first money for the first trip to Washington. The rest were all farmers from Platte and Bucannan Counties. After we needed more resources in our treasury to meet the needs of the trips to Washington--the first few years we went to Washington the association paid half of their fare--we made an effort to contact the club in Plattsburg, the Chamber of Commerce, or whatever it was. (In) 1963 some representatives of our association went up before this group, which was a citizen meeting group of Plattsburg, and told our story of what we proposed and hoped to be of some benefit to Plattsburg and so forth. The Plattsburg group responded very generously, because apparently practically every one in the meeting had by that night contributed \$10. A lot of them continued a lot of years afterwards. So, we got the support of Plattsburg. The ones that were interested in Platte and Buchanan Counties, they contacted their neighbors and friends; and it built up our membership to 150, which made us approximately \$1500 a year.

Many changes have occurred in the area since the development of Smithville Lake. Besides changes in the land itself, long time residents anticipate an influx of new people.

The thing is, back in the 60's, Paradise was full of people that had lived there for years and years. They were old, and they didn't have children. When they passed away, their homes became for sale, and young people bought them, and they had youngsters, and that is the difference. It was just a cycle that we went through. I think there are twenty to twenty-five homes in Paradise, that is an estimate; but I would say that at least nine or ten of those homes have youngsters in it, and from one to four or five in each of them. That is the cycle we went through here. (The Corps) bought 72 and one half acres off me, which was about one-third

of what my dad had given me when he died, and they bought all of our water. I guess this would have been in 1975 and 1976 that they did that. In 1976 we had some people come in here from Salt Lake City, and they wanted to buy our land, and they offered us enough that we didn't think we could afford to keep it; and we sold, my sister and I sold, 289 acres to those people. They are going to make a sports complex in here. You will buy a membership in it, and they will furnish you with whatever it is you want to play with, swimming pool, tennis, boats, and what-have-you. We joined all of our land here, joins the park area, and we will only be about a mile, mile and a half from boat docks and that type of thing. So whenever they start keeping water and the roads are completed in here, we look for a big movement of people around through this area. They started two years ago, and every spring, I would say, we would have 100 cars up and down this road that aren't doing anything except looking the area over. I would say out of that 100 cars there are probably 90 of them that would like to buy a piece of land so they could be on this lake. It if turns out to be half or two-thirds of what they anticipate, there is going to be a lot of traffic out here (Buster Summers).

Although work towards a flood control project had begun prior to the 1965 flood, the disaster demonstrated the need for a water project to many residents of the area.

You know if anyone had come in here with the government program prior to 1965, they would have got run out with a shotgun (Link V. Evans).

Some of the inhabitants of the affected region feel that the presentation of the proposed project was unsatisfactory and were equally unhappy with the project itself.

About 1970 or 1971 (we) read it in the paper. We really didn't know what it was all about. If we would have known what it was all about, there would have been some stumbling blocks put in the way. A dam was planned for Kansas City to get water out of and pump it dry as fast as it would run in. We went to two meetings in Smithville and the Corps of Engineer (representative) got up there and blab-blabbled his mouth off. We had a neighbor man that really shut him up; and we went to another, and he got shut up again. (He was telling) all the good points of what they were going to do. We knew good and well it wasn't going to do anything but destroy some neighborhood. (The meeting) was pretty full down there at Smithville. I'd be satisfied to say there was 200 people there. The Corps of Engineers won out. They said they were going to buy us out, and 'pay what we offer you, and that is it,' and 'move out' (Clyde Taylor).

A major form of opposition to the project stemmed from disagreement over the value of the property which was sold to the government. Some people felt they were treated unfairly.

In a year or two, three or four years (they came to see us). They told us we was going to have to move, and they didn't give a damn about any of us. They said we had to move out, and 'take what we give you.' They were suppose to negotiate, but they didn't. When the negotiator comes, 'we are going to give you the appraised price and that is it.' I told him, I says, 'now you told me back six months ago and the man that is negotiating for Tom Porter across the road told me the same thing, that both places was appraised too cheap.' He says 'I can't raise it a penny.' (Clyde Taylor).

Other land owners were satisfied with their sales.

The bottoms of that creek where I farmed forty years ago, they got trees on them about that big around now, maple trees. There ain't been nothing raised on them in forty years. The people quit. They just were wasting their time putting them in. It just growed up in brush, worthless. Of course this lake come along, you know, and they gave them a good price for it (Reuben Ross).

I was just lucky that the government took it in a way. It wouldn't have brought me that kind of money from nobody else (Roy Bailey).

No amount of money, however, could replace the sentimental value of the land. Loss of family homesteads has caused some resentment toward the project.

The Corps of Engineers says, 'don't worry.' Worry nothing, they don't know nothing about it. If they had lived there all their lives, they would have had to worry, there was no way out of it (Clyde Taylor).

Many of the residents of the Smithville Lake region are ambivalent about the project. Relief from disaster, enthusiasm for new economic opportunities, and optimism for the chance of regrowth of the towns within the project area are tempered by sadness at the loss of farm lands which have been passed down through their families and which have, therefore, been integral parts of their lives. Lucille Taylor summarized this view:

I feel for the people that the ground had been in their family for years. I hate to see those kinds of things destroyed. I didn't have any sympathy for the people that just went out and bought in the hopes of making a fast buck, I didn't feel sorry for them. They knew what was coming. You know it was half a dozen to one and six to another. It was pro and con both ways. I felt like we needed the dam; not just

to protect the town, because there is no way they would have spent that much money on it to protect our little town. It was also downstream, the water that was needed for the North area. It was time that some sort of recreation was to come into the north part of the state, too. It will help. Oh, I don't think I will live long enough to where I will see Smithville really booming. I think it will take a good many years before that. I know there will be areas out around that will, but I think a little will rub off on us.

APPENDIX A
SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWS

SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWS



Eugene Arthur

Rocky Point School, the river, games, Paradise School, lodges, Smithville, Trimble, trains, Mecca, chautauquas, World War I, flu epidemic, farming, seining, preparing carp, planes, and dressing chickens

Roy Bailey

The family farm, Mecca, ball games, 4th of July in Mecca, the train, fishing, the dam, floods, hunting, hog butchering and preservation, mules and horses, Smithville, dances, airplanes, Paradise, Mecca Black School, chautauquas, races, the Depression, farming, changes from the reservoir



Virgil Bainbridge

Family history, school, box suppers, parties, fishing, hunting, horses and mules, tractors, Saturday in Smithville, movies, the balloon, airplanes mail, Paradise, Mecca, the trains, affect of cars, courtship, the Depression, flu epidemic, beef club, neighbors, hog butchering, preserving pork, smoking hams, lard press, stills, tobacco farming



Don Breckenridge
Plattsburg, entertainment, first
car, trains, honeymoon, chautauqua,
Plattsburg College, airplanes



Irene Breckenridge
Mecca stores, "sit and whittle club",
Oakland School, Plattsburg stores,
milking, storm cellars, hog butchering,
beef club, local butcher, lard
rendering, church, mailman, threshing,
Halloween, chautauquas, first plane
ride, Paradise, early radios



Jesse Edwards
Covered bridge--Noah's Ark, mail carrier,
pie suppers, corn sheller, alfalfa,
first car in town, first car
owned, mules and horses, horse shows,
the fairs, the Depression, races,
old farming methods, hand fishing
church fish fries, preparing carp, hog
butchering, trains, raising tobacco,
early Smithville dam, floods



Link V. Evans

Beginning of Apollo Soda, Apollo Statue, first truck in town, the town well, floods, Hutchinson Bottle, Apollo House, Apollo soda factory operations



Harold (Shorty) Harris

The dam, the Little Platte River, beavers, flood of 1965, the mills, grandfather's stories, going to Smithville, magazine subscriptions, bartering, schools, box suppers, Halloween, dances, courtship, early radios, selling furs, buggy rides, the railroad



Marjory Harris

The dam, the river, floods, mills, history of the area, going to Smithville, magazine subscriptions, bartering, airplanes, schools, Halloween, dances, courtship, radios, buggy rides, railroads



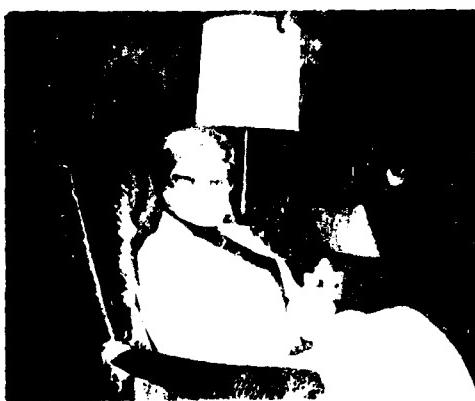
James E. Justus

Beginning the reservoir project,
Urban Renewal, Smithville water sys-
tem, Smithville electric plant, the
ice plant, the Smithville High School
gym



Robin Lewis

The theaters, Buster Keaton, Buster
Brown, horse races, Saturday night
in Smithville, Paradise business,
poultry house, Smithville bank,
changes in the Little Platte, ice
skating, first car in town, the
Smithville newspapers, the Depression,
WPA, roads, trains, town well, the
mail man



Alta Martin

Testing cream in father's store, Oak-
land School, Stoney Point School,
Mecca, trains, chautauquas, Plattsburg,
poem about Mecca, working in the
Mecca store, seining, Paradise thea-
ter, flu epidemic, World War I,
courting



Hugh Martin

Blacksmith shop, road work, "go-devil" machine, mules and horses, 4th of July in Mecca, bootleg whiskey, ice skating, Prairie Point School, windmills, pranks on teacher, Paradise, the chautauquas, Kansas City train, airplane, flu epidemic, ball teams



Ora May

Early homes, Little Branch Creek, hand fishing, Mecca: stores, ice cream socials, first car seen, sorghum making, Mecca Black School, childhood games, trains, Trimble, Smithville Carnival, Paradise

Frances Orr

Family homestead, ancestors, blue-grass stripper, baptism, hog butchering, food preservation, beef club, school, teaching, Paradise, parties, Kansas City train, stock on trains, Smithville ice-plant, Mecca, chautauquas, winter roads, floods, ice skating, flu epidemic, funerals, girls' basketball, airplanes, changes in farming, effect of the dam, dates



Nannie Payton

Early life, chores, cradling wheat, tobacco growing, Benton School, Smithville High School, maple syrup, parties, Halloween, Smithville, Buster Brown, marriage, floods, flu epidemic, baptism, hammocks, fruit cellar, Depression, food processing, hand soap making, Edgerton mill, washing clothes, kerosene stove, chivaree, wedding parties, Inner Urban Train, Paradise, Methodists, pranks at church, beef club, wells, ice skating, picking geese, chickens, papering log walls



Willard Payton

Smithville grocery stores, square dances, Oak Grove School, house building, concrete work, bartering, renting land, babies, lumber hauling, road grading, Patterson Mill, crops, hand fishing, putting up ice, horse shows, love boat at fair, trains, mail hack, mail man, floods, Depression, early cars, town well, the balloon, telephones, butchering, lard rendering sausage stuffing



Claud Porter

Horn College, school, chores, parties, old Smithville, Totallope, horse shows, courtship, sedding, Depression, bridge pilings, the pipe line, floods, hunting, Jenkins Furniture, carpenter work, Paradise, Halloween, first car, horses and cars, flu epidemic, stills



Reuben Ross with wife Lyda
Ross' Mill, saw mill, swimming, ice skating, school, Paradise, grist mill, farm work, flooding, Kansas City train, mailman, courting, horse shows, planes, hand fishing, road work, bootlegging, electricity, kerosene lights, the Depression, Smithville Lake



Benton Summers
Moving, house building, Paradise, beef club, butchering, meat preservation, cutting ice, typical farm day, hand fishing, Paradise School, school teachers, Halloween, circus, revivals, Smithville High School, Miller's baseball field, horse races, Trimble grain elevator, trains, Mecca, Ross' Mill Bridge, grist mills, World War I, German immigrants, population changes, the Depression



Buster Summers
Ancestry, mushrooms, hunting, selling pelts, coyotes, poultry house, grocery stores, lard soap, peanut butter, mules, threshing, bailing hay, cattle markets, granery, chores, Paradise School, smoking cigarettes, floods, doodling, getting to school, ice storm, Saturday night in Smithville, horse races, baseball team, chautauqua, planes, bomber plant, changes in the area, the Corps, driving cattle, courting



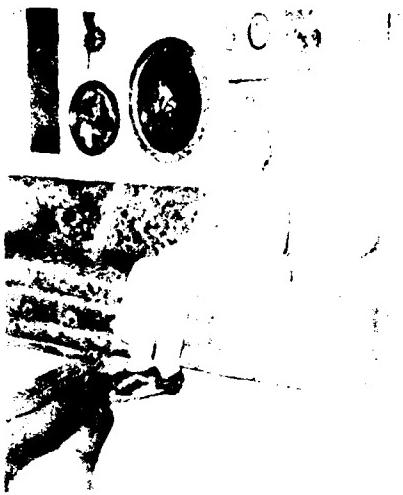
Charles Ray Taylor
Threshing, butchering, tobacco
farming, last train ride, the old
dam, the big sleet



Clyde Taylor
Mecca drug store, saw mill, house
building, flu epidemic, train through
Mecca, driving hogs, Oakland School,
4 th of July in Mecca, clover huller,
threshing, grist mill, blacksmith,
Little Platte River, steaming walnut,
the Depression, early Mecca, the
reservoir, wild flowers, entertain-
ment, electricity, Corps



Evalyn Taylor
Mecca drugstore, saw mill, flu epi-
demic, Oakland School, 4 th of July
in Mecca, threshing, the river, Mecca,
the Depression, Trimble Wildlife
Preserve, wild flowers, entertainment,
holidays, the Corps and the reservoir



Lucille Taylor
the Kansas City Train, drugstore,
Smithville on Saturday night, sleigh
rides, entertainment, Festival Days,
Patterson Museum, post-flood unity,
the dam, Plattsburg, flood effects,
north and south Smithville, Apollo
Soda, the hospital, decline of Smith-
ville business, high school activities

Lucile Wright
Family history, Smithville School,
Kansas City, trains, wearing braces,
Buster Brown, style shows, chautau-
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APPENDIX C
SCOPE OF WORK

Contract No. DACW41-79-C-0027

APPENDIX A

This Appendix A supplements ARTICLE 1 of the contract and delineates the services to be performed by the Contractor under this contract.

1. INTRODUCTION.

a. The Kansas City District, Corps of Engineers, is currently constructing the Smithville Dam and Lake Project on the Little Platte River in Clay and Clinton Counties, Missouri. About 20,000 acres of fee land will be acquired for the project, approximately 7,200 acres of which will be inundated by the multipurpose pool.

b. A cultural resources survey of the Smithville Lake project was completed in 1978. One volume of this survey report discussed the historic resources:

D. Shockley, "Cultural Resources Survey of Smithville Lake, Missouri; Volume 2: History." U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, Kansas City, Missouri.

c. The work defined herein to be performed by the Contractor is called for in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (PL 89-665) and is authorized for funding under Public Law 86-523 as amended by Public Law 92-291. Accomplishment of this work will provide documentation evidencing compliance with Executive Order 11593 "Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment," dated 13 May 1971, Section 2(a).

2. SCOPE.

a. This study will be undertaken to partially mitigate the effects of water resources development on historical resources in the project area. In order to collect ethnographic data on historical sites, interviews and transcriptions thereof shall be conducted with approximately twenty-five (25) local persons known to possess extensive knowledge of historic events significant to the project vicinity.

b. The Contractor and his staff shall conduct this study in a professional manner, using accepted methodology in accordance with 36CFR66. The Contractor shall be responsible for the preparation of a report of findings, fulfilling the requirements stated below.

3. STUDY APPROACH.

a. Mitigation. The mitigation of adverse impacts on a historical site can be accomplished by investigation based on research design approved by the Government and the State Historic Preservation Officer. The research design in accordance with 36CFR66, shall be directed toward recovery and presentation of data. The mitigation action includes data analysis to the extent that it answers the research questions. Mitigation does not include funding of future research, but does require making materials acquired under this contract available for research.

b. Problem Orientation.

(1) This contracted study is to be organized in terms of study problems. These investigation queries will be developed in some detail by the Contractor in the course of preparing a research design. The Contractor shall be well informed on the pertinent regional history and fully qualified to resolve study problems pertaining to the endangered cultural remains.

(2) The basic goal of the study shall be the collection of data about historic sites obtained through systematic interviewing of people, with the intention of preserving their memories about the ways in which people have lived in the Smithville project area. For example, how have agriculture, fishing, hunting, mining, recreation, old-age, youth, Government, and family in the study area changed over the years in the recent past (i.e., socializing events, barn dances, house raisings, schooling styles, spelling bees)?

c. Methodology. In order to investigate the sites and provide data directed toward the problems presented, the Contractor shall, in accordance with the research design, use accepted methods in accordance with 36CFR66 to perform the following activities:

(1) Record interviews with appropriate local individuals. The list of names of individuals to be interviewed will be coordinated with the Government.

(2) Transcribe and edit tapes to obtain format suitable for general publication.

(3) Provide at least one black and white portrait style facial view and one full length view photograph and 35mm color slide of each interviewee (if permitted) and one or more photos of appropriate settings, sites, or locales discussed in each of the interviews.

(4) Obtain, when possible, copies of relevant archival illustrations suitable for interpretive uses in display, publications, or slide presentations.

(5) Obtain from each interviewee, a signed release from the Privacy Act of 1974. The Government will supply form MRK 89 for this purpose.

(6) Delineate locations of sites, when practicable, on USGS 7½ min quads and on other base maps provided by the Government.

4. SCHEDULE OF WORK.

a. Coordination and Meetings. The Contractor shall pursue the study in a professional manner to meet the schedule specified. Prior to the initiation of actual fieldwork, the Contractor shall submit a research design for review and approval as stated in Section 3a. He shall also coordinate all field schedules and activities with the appropriate cultural resources coordinator, SHPO's representative, and the project office.

During the course of the study, the Contractor shall submit a monthly progress report. In addition, the Contractor shall review the progress of the work performed with representatives of the Corps of Engineers and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) at meetings as follows:

(1) Coordination meetings with the Government to include at least one during the field season at field headquarters.

(2) One meeting, early in the report-writing phase, at the SHPO's office with representatives of the SHPO, the Contractor, and the Government to discuss findings, and report content and format.

(3) One meeting at the Kansas City District Office to discuss the review of the draft of the report.

b. Report Content and Schedule.

(1) A report of findings shall be prepared by the Contractor and his staff. The report is intended to be of use and interest to the general public as well as of value to the profession. Use of illustrations is encouraged.

(2) The report shall be authored by either the principal investigator or project director. If the project director is not the author, he shall review and edit the report prior to submission of the draft and final versions.

(3) Thirteen (13) copies of the draft report and edited transcripts with representative unedited transcripts shall be submitted to the Contracting Officer for purposes of Governmental review within twelve (12) months after receipt of notice to proceed. (If excessive inclement weather or other delays occur, this date may be extended to one mutually agreed upon between the Government and the Contractor.) In addition to standard review procedures, the Government may (at its discretion) send the draft report and Scope of Work to three qualified professionals not associated with a State or Federal Governmental agency

for peer review of the merits and acceptability of the report. After a review period of approximately two (2) months, the Government will return the draft to the Contractor. The Contractor then shall complete necessary revisions and submit the final report, which shall be professionally edited, within sixty (60) calendar days after receipt of the reviewed draft. The Contractor shall submit one set of originals and two copies of the final report of findings to the Government. The copies shall include all plates, maps, and graphics in place so that they may be used as patterns for assembling the final report. The Government will edit the final report and after approval, will reproduce this report and provide the Contractor ten (10) copies for personal use, plus two (2) copies for each major contributing author.

(4) The report shall include the following:

- (a) Edited synopsis of interviews;
- (b) A discussion of the information collected, patterned by the research design discussed under Study Approach above;
- (c) A detailed description of the methods used in field-work and analysis;
- (d) An abstract not exceeding 250 words;
- (e) Illustrations, photos, and graphic representations of data appropriate to the test, such as selected photographs of the interviewees and sites described in the interviews;
- (f) A glossary of terms;
- (g) Reference section with all sources referred to in text or used for report, personal communications, interviews, bibliography, etc.;
- (h) Copies of all correspondence pertaining to the review of the draft report. These are to include the comments of the State Historic Preservation Officer, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, and the peer reviews (if applicable) by professional historians requested by the Government, together with responses to each of the comments given. The Scope of Work is to be included in this section; and
- (i) Listing of principal investigators and their qualifications, and a list of field and lab personnel, as an appendix.
- (j) Project map with location of historical sites.

(5) The final originals and two copies of the report shall be typed single-spaced on one side of paper with the margins set for reproduction on both sides of 8 x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch paper. One of the copies shall be assembled in accordance with the attached style sheet. (To be added later.)

(6) Form NTIS-35, available from the National Technical Information Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, Springfield, Virginia 22161, shall be inclosed.

c. Other Information.

(1) Six copies of materials not suitable for publication in the report shall be submitted with the draft. These materials include USGS and other site maps, tapes of interviews, unedited transcriptions of taped interviews, copies of release forms for each interview, copies of those photographs not included in the report, and other documentation not of interest to most readers of the report.

(2) Personal Information. Documents containing personal information are not to be released to the public. Reference should be made to Article 37. Privacy Act (1975 NOV) of this contract.

(3) Materials Not for Release. Information gathered during the investigations which deal with exact historical or archeological site locations are considered confidential and are not to be published or released.

d. Storage of Materials.

(1) Attached to the letter of transmittal for the final report shall be a listing of all collected investigations and a Certificate of Authenticity for this information. Collections shall be properly stored in containers clearly marked "Property of the U.S. Government, Kansas City District, Corps of Engineers."

(2) On completion of the final report, no materials will be retained by the Contractor. All tapes, documents, photographs, and other materials will be given to the Government for storage and distribution to appropriate Federal and State agencies. This is to comply with the rules and regulations issued for the operation of a system of records on individuals in compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974.

5. FURTHER RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONTRACTOR AND GOVERNMENT.

a. Contract Modifications.

(1) Because of the complex nature of the historic resources being preserved, it is recognized that situations may arise or data may be encountered that was not anticipated in the design of this study. If in the opinion of the Contracting Officer such additional work is needed, the contract will be modified pursuant to the provision of Article 2, Changes. of the Contract.

(2) The work identified in this document shall be complete in itself. There will be no assurance from the Government that additional work will follow, nor should such work be anticipated.

b. Data Availability. The Government shall provide the Contractor with available background information, maps, reports (if any), and correspondence as needed. In addition, the Government will provide support to the Contractor regarding suggestions on data sources, format of study outline and report, and review of study progress.

c. Right-of-Entry. The Contractor shall have right-of-entry on all property owned by the Government.

d. Publication. It is expected that the Contractor and those in his employ, may during the term of the contract, present reports of the work to various professional societies and publications. Outlines or abstracts of those reports dealing with work sponsored by the Corps of Engineers shall be sent to the Kansas City District Office for review and approval prior to presentation or publication. Proper credit shall be given for Corps of Engineers' sponsored work, and the Corps of Engineers shall be furnished six (6) copies of each paper presented and/or published report.

e. Court Testimony. In the event of controversy or court challenge, the Contractor shall make appropriate expert witnesses available and under contract shall testify on behalf of the Government in support of the report findings.

f. Safety Requirements. The Contractor shall provide a safe working environment for all persons in his employ as prescribed by EM 385-1-1, "General Safety Requirements," a copy of which will be provided by the Government.

g. Evaluation for National Register. The Contractor shall evaluate newly found historical sites to determine their suitability for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and shall make recommendations to the Government for the preservation, management, and nomination of those sites which appear to qualify. If a potential National Register site exists, the Contractor shall prepare all National Register forms, and submit them to the Contracting Officer for review and processing.

6. STAFF AND FACILITY REQUIREMENTS.

a. Project Director and Historian. Minimum qualifications are set forth in 36CFR66, Appendix C, and the Office of Historic Preservation's Guidelines for Contract Cultural Resource Survey Reports and Professional Qualifications.

b. Consultants. Personnel hired or subcontracted for their special knowledge and expertise must carry academic and experiential qualifications in their own fields of competence.

c. Equipment and Facilities. The Contractor must also provide or demonstrate access to:

(1) Adequate permanent field and laboratory equipment necessary to conduct operations defined in the Scope of Work, and

(2) Adequate laboratory and office space and facilities for proper treatment and analysis of records likely to be obtained from the project.

ARTICLE 37. Privacy Act (1975 NOV).

(a) The Contractor agrees:

(1) to comply with the Privacy Act of 1974 and the rules and regulations issued pursuant to the Act in the design, development, and/or operation of any system of records on individuals in order to accomplish an agency function, when the contract specifically identifies (i) the system or systems of records and (ii) the work to be performed by the Contractor in terms of any one or combination of the following: (A) design, (B) development, or (C) operation;

(2) to include the solicitation notification contained in this contract in every solicitation and resulting subcontract and in every subcontract awarded without a solicitation, when the statement of work in the proposed subcontract requires the design, development, or operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function.

(3) to include this clause, including this paragraph (3), in all subcontracts awarded pursuant to this contract which require the design, development, or operation of such a system of records.

(b) In the event of violations of the Act, a civil action may be brought against the agency involved when the violation concerns the design, development, or operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function and criminal penalties may be imposed upon the officers or employees of the agency when the violation concerns the operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function. For purposes of the Act, when the contract is for the operation of a system of records on individuals to accomplish an agency function, the contractor and any employee of the contractor is considered to be an employee of the agency.

(c) The terms used in this clause have the following meanings:

(1) "Operation of a system of records" means performance of any of the activities associated with maintaining the system of records including the collection, use, and dissemination of records.

(2) "Record" means any item, collection, or grouping of information about an individual that is maintained by an agency, including, but not limited to, his education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history and that contains his name, or the identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual, such as a finger or voice print or a photograph.

(3) "System of records" on individuals means a group of any records under the control of any agency from which information is retrieved by the name of the individual or by some identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual.

APPENDIX D
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/INTERVIEWER QUALIFICATIONS

Craig Sturdevant/Project Director, Co-Principal Investigator-Author
Director/Environmental Research Center, Inc.
719 Houchin
Jefferson City, Missouri

Educational Background

B.S. Sociology	University of Iowa, Iowa City 1967
M.A. Anthropology	University of Iowa, Iowa City 1971
PhD. Candidate, Anthropology	University of Missouri, Columbia

Employment Background

Teaching/Research Assistant Anthropology	University of Iowa, Iowa City 1968-1971
Assistant Professor Anthropology	Lincoln University 1972-present

Consultant Background

Director	Environmental Research Center 1976-present
----------	---

Experience/Oral History

Black Oral History courses	University of Iowa, Iowa City 1969
Black Community Oral History Project, Interviewer	University of Iowa, Iowa City 1970
Ethnohistory courses	University of Iowa, Iowa City
Director, Bicentennial Oral History Project, MO Humanities Grant	Lincoln University, Jefferson City 1976

Ruthi Sturdevant/Co-Principal Investigator-Author
719 Houchin
Jefferson City, Missouri

Educational Background

B.A. Mathematics & English Anthropology minor	Lincoln University, Jefferson City 1973
M.A. Statistics	University of Missouri, Columbia 1977
PhD. Candidate, Statistics Linguistic course work	University of Missouri, Columbia University of Missouri, Columbia

Employment Background

Teaching Assistant Statistics	University of Missouri, Columbia 1973-1978
Interviewer, Architectural Historian, Methodologist	Environmental Research Center 1976-present

John Whitehouse/Interviewer
3303 LaFayette
Omaha, Nebraska

Educational Background

B.A. & M.A. Anthropology/ Socio-Cultural Anthropology, Ethnohistory	University of Iowa, Iowa City 1970
---	---------------------------------------

Employment Background

Director	Homestead Institute, Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska 1975-present
Interviewer	Environmental Research Center 1978-present

Experience/Oral History

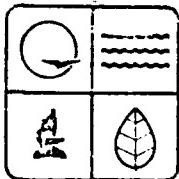
Interviewer	Black Community Oral History Program, University of Iowa 1968-1970
Oral History course work	University of Iowa, Iowa City 1967-1970

Rufus Harmon/Photographer
Jefferson City, Missouri

Experience

Photographer	Jefferson City News-Tribune 1970-1975
	Free-lance photographer 1970-present

APPENDIX E
REVIEWER COMMENTS AND RESPONSES



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

P.O. Box 176 Jefferson City, Missouri 65102 (314) 751-4422

Mr. Paul D. Barber
Chief, Engineering Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Kansas City District
700 Federal Building
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

Re: Oral History Mitigation, Smithville Lake Project, Clinton & Clay Counties, Missouri

Dear Mr. Barber:

In response to your letter dated 3 March 1980 the Missouri Historic Preservation Program has reviewed the February 1980 preliminary draft report entitled "Smithville Lake Historical Resources Mitigation Program: Oral History" by Craig Sturdevant. Based on this review, we find the report to be thoroughly researched, well written and organized and undoubtedly it will contribute to our knowledge of the recent past history of the Smithville area. The Corps should be commended for undertaking such an innovative study.

However, we would like to suggest that a series of maps, showing general locations of the various topics discussed, be included as an appendix to the report. This would help the reader to relate these areas specifically to each other and would contribute to the report.

If you have any questions, please direct them to Michael Weichman of my staff at 314/751-4096.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Fred A. Lafser
Director and State Historic
Preservation Officer

FAL:MW:jk

Joseph P. Teasdale Governor
Fred A. Lafser Director



United States Department of the Interior
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE
INTERAGENCY ARCHEOLOGICAL SERVICES—DENVER
P.O. BOX 25387, DENVER FEDERAL CENTER
DENVER, COLORADO 80225

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1201-05(W530)

APR 29 1980

Mr. Donald L. Fritts
Assistant Chief, Engineering Division
Department of the Army
Kansas City District
Corps of Engineers
700 Federal Building
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

Dear Mr. Fritts:

In response to your request of March 3, 1980 to Mr. Rogers of our Washington office, we have completed our review of the draft report entitled, "Smithville Lake Historical Resources, Mitigation Program: Oral History." Enclosed please find copies of individual reviews.

The use of oral history as a method of mitigating adverse effects to cultural resources is beyond our field of expertise. Therefore, reviewers have directed substance of their comments to utility of the study in context of contract requirements. In this respect, the study is deficient in collecting useable data on historic sites. Reviewers also noted curious gaps and biases in the transcription of selected material.

Thank you for allowing us to review this report; we trust that our comments prove useful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JJ Hoffman".

J. J. Hoffman
Acting Chief, Interagency
Archeological Services - Denver

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

DATE: April 21, 1980

memorandum

SUBJECT: Review of Preliminary Draft: "Smithville Lake Historical Resources Mitigation Program: Oral History" prepared by Environmental Research Center, Jefferson City, MO. February 1980, submitted to the U. S. Army
to: Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, Contract No. DACW41-79-C-0027
Supervisory Archeologist (Hoffman) *JH*

Scope-of-Work

SOW calls for: "The basic goal of the study shall be the collection of data about historic sites obtained through systematic interviewing of people, with the intention of preserving their memories about the ways in which people have lived in the Smithville project area. For example, how have agriculture, fishing, hunting, mining, recreation, old-age, youth, Government, and family in the study area changed over the years in the recent past (i.e., socializing event, barn dances, house raisings, schooling styles, spelling bees)?"

General Comments

Seventy-five years of oral history of the Smithville Lake area is presented through interviews of 26 long-time residents. Work was carried out between March 1979 and February 1980.

This is a rather interesting, albeit overly long and somewhat dull, commentary of past life and times in rural northwestern Missouri over the past 75 years. The contractor has done a yeoman-like job; nevertheless there are certain troublesome aspects to this report.

First, it is not wholly responsive to the SOW. Very little of this oral history relates to historic sites as called for. There is ample discussion of flooding, the Platte, daily life, socializing, but almost none of this relates to historic structures and places. In fact, there is no discussion or list of local historic or national register sites for the project area.

Secondly, the oral history is heavily weighted toward discussions of flooding and the Platte River. I am certain that the river and floods were big events and important in the lives of the inhabitants, however, the report serves as a propaganda foil for the Smithville Lake project rather than being an unbiased oral history. It is obvious to this reviewer that the informants were led to talk at considerable length about the river and flooding. This was done at the expense of other events. For instance it seems strange that excursions to the big city (Kansas City) are never mentioned yet this must have been a significant activity in the lives of the informants as young children.



Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
(REV. 7-78)
GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6
GSA GEN. REG.

Third, dates and a time frame or a context for the events described are not always provided. Sometimes it is not possible to determine just when the activities actually transpired. Minimally, the event should be keyed to a decade or whenever possible to a more narrow time span.

Fourth, who is the individual(s) responsible for writing this report? No report should be nameless.

Minor Comments

Figures 8 (p. 117), 9 (p. 120), 12 (p. 137), 13 (p. 144), and 14 (p. 154) are missing.

Pages 140, 226-33 and 5 pages of informants are mounted upside down.

P. 115 last para. reference milk cows. What does " - - - save the cream and sold the cream." mean?

DATE: April 28, 1980

memorandum

SUBJECT: Review of "Smithville Lake Historical Resources Mitigation Program: Oral History"
TO: Supervisory Archeologist (Hoffman) *JFH*

This report is quite interesting, although verbose, and contains a great deal of potentially useful information for studies of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century history of the Smithville area. The content of the report and the intent of the Scope-of-Work do not seem to be in complete agreement, however.

Most importantly, the Scope asked for the collection of data about historic sites. I could not find much information about specific historic sites included in this text. Also, very importantly, there were no maps at all. Besides being essential for understanding what went on in Smithville and the surrounding areas, a project map was required by the Scope-of-Work. Also, the inclusion of more photographs would have helped illustrate the verbal content of the text. According to the Scope, at least one photo of appropriate settings, sites, or locales discussed was to be included. Perhaps also a verbal description of the environment of the Smithville area would help to round out this report.



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OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
(REV. 7-76)
GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6
5010-112

DATE: April 28, 1980

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

memorandum

SUBJECT: Review of "Smithville Lake Historical Resources Mitigation Program: Oral History."

TO: Review Coordinator *JHT*

Subject report is a draft prepared under Contract DACW41-79-C-0027 with the Kansas City District, Corps of Engineers. It consists of a series of selected oral interviews which were transcribed and edited to reflect topics of general interest and local experience. Methods and rationale for selection of interviewees are detailed in the report. Oral history is not my field of expertise. Therefore, I could read this report only in context of the main purposes of the study as set forth in the Scope-of-Work: (1) to partially mitigate the affects of water resources development on historical resources in the area, and (2) collection of data that will preserve memories of past lifeways in the project area.

The latter purpose is well accomplished. At least I came away with definite feelings regarding Smithville lifeways over the past 75 or so years. There are some interesting gaps, of course. No mention is made of Klan activities during the 1920s, and the section on bootlegging only hints at complex economic networks developed by certain entrepreneurs between Kansas City and satellite communities. I suspect that historians recognize such problems when comparing documentary evidence to oral history.

The first purpose of the study has a subsidiary goal of collecting ethnographic data on historical sites. The interviews contained numerous references to historic sites. But since they are personal recollections, they do not contain the sort of data that would permit useable identification and assessment of the sites as historical resources. Thus, it is difficult to evaluate the utility of this study in partially mitigating effects on historical resources. It should also be pointed out that ethnographic data can be extracted from personal interviews, but oral history and ethnographic data are two different things.

On balance, this is a pleasant series of recollections which will provide a useful adjunct to local folk history. Hopefully, this volume will find wide distribution in the Smithville community.



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5010-112

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES COMMENTS:
RESPONSE

A map with locational information has been included in Appendix F.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE COMMENTS:
RESPONSE TO REVIEWER I

Comment 1: The reviewer seems to be using a narrow definition of the term "historic sites" suggesting this to apply only to buildings. Structures of historical significance and potential for National Register nomination are covered in Cultural Resources Survey of Smithville Lake, Missouri, Volume 3: Architecture. The "historic sites" mentioned in the scope of work, as interpreted by the authors of this report, were taken to mean any place where community events occurred. Thus, the banks of the Platte, the schools, the farms, and the various towns were considered "historic sites".

In Part 2.a. of the Scope of Work it is stated that interviewees should be "local persons known to possess extensive knowledge of historic events significant to the project vicinity." Further, the primary objective of the study, listed under 3. Study Approach, b. (2). and quoted by the reviewer, lists examples of events which have changed over the years and makes no mention of buildings. Since the Scope of Work specifically cited activities and since an architectural survey had already been conducted, the authors of this report felt that the Oral History was intended to be event oriented. It was, therefore, the approach of the editor to include statements regarding the activities which happened at a site rather than a description of the site itself. Many places, such as fields, roads, and river banks, which are not eligible for National Register status are never the less significant to the lives of those who lived in the area.

Comment 2: Environmental Research Center is an independent organization, not a producer of propaganda for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Platte River has had an enormous impact on every aspect, from economic to recreational, of the lives of the people in the Smithville Lake region. Rather than being "led" to discuss the effects of river life, it was difficult to persuade interviewees to go to other subjects once the topic of the river had been broached.

As Kansas City is not within the project boundaries, a special chapter on visits to the "big city" seemed inappropriate and not within the Scope of Work. Trips to Kansas City are mentioned in the chapter on Modern Technology in the discussion on train travel, as the city related to automobile purchase, and in the creation of road service.

Comment 3: Lack of specific dates in reference to various topics is a weakness of the report in some areas. Two factors provided obstacles to ascertaining time periods. Frequently the informant did not know exactly when an event happened, and some transitions occurred so gradually that it was impossible for the interviewee to pinpoint a date. Dating procedures presented another problem. Questions about specific time periods often led to statements, such as "when the well was dug" or "when the neighbor was ill", which were not always relevant to the report or to the topic under consideration. Thus, attempts to press the informant for a definite date were often counter productive.

Comment 4: Apparently the reviewer missed page vi, which lists the contributors to this project.

Minor Comments: a). As the note following the cover page indicates, some photographs were not available at the time the draft report was prepared; however, these are included in the final draft. b). Binding errors have been corrected. c). Line 38, page 115 has been rewritten to indicate that cream was saved to be sold rather than used for personal consumption.

HCRS COMMENTS:
RESPONSE TO REVIEWER 2

Comment 1: See response to HCRS 1 regarding the Scope of Work.

Comment 2: See response to Comment to Missouri Department of Natural Resources Review regarding maps.

Comment 3: As quoted in the chapter on flooding, (see pages 26 and 29), many people lost their photographs during the floods. The authors made every attempt to obtain as many photographs as possible and to include them in the report; however, there were very few old pictures remaining in the area.

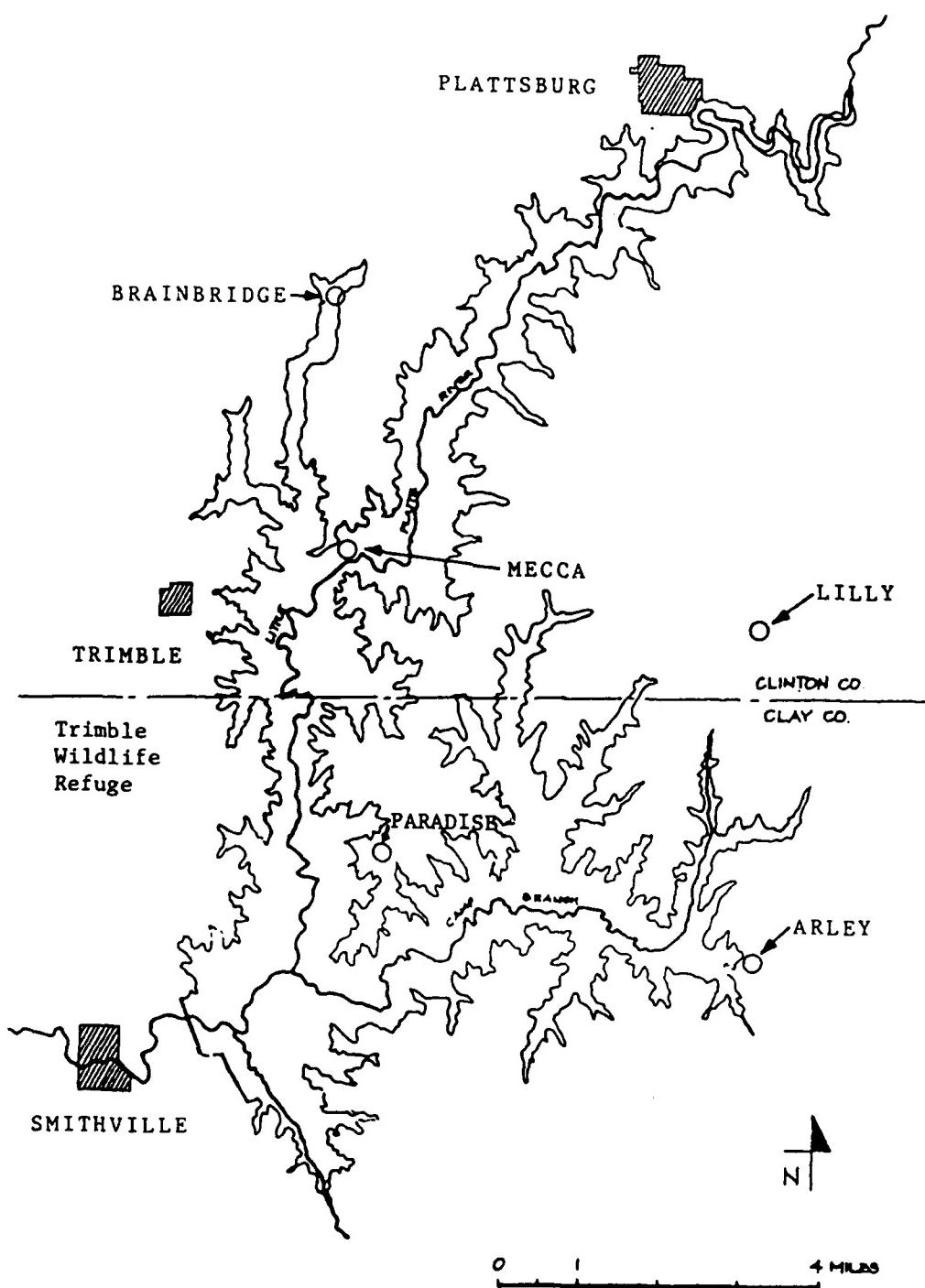
HCRS COMMENTS:
RESPONSE TO REVIEWER 3

Any oral history is bound to have omissions. With the relatively small sample of 26 people, there were topics which could not be covered because sometimes no one knew enough about them to discuss them. Other subjects, such as bootlegging and KKK activities, were so sensitive that the informants were reluctant to mention them, particularly on tape. (Some interviewees were hesitant to talk about hand-fishing because it is now illegal.) While gaps are noticeable in some cases, they are unavoidable and a function of the study methodology. As the reviewer points out, recorded facts are not the same as oral history.

APPENDIX F

MAPS

Figure 22.
General Location Map of
the Study Area



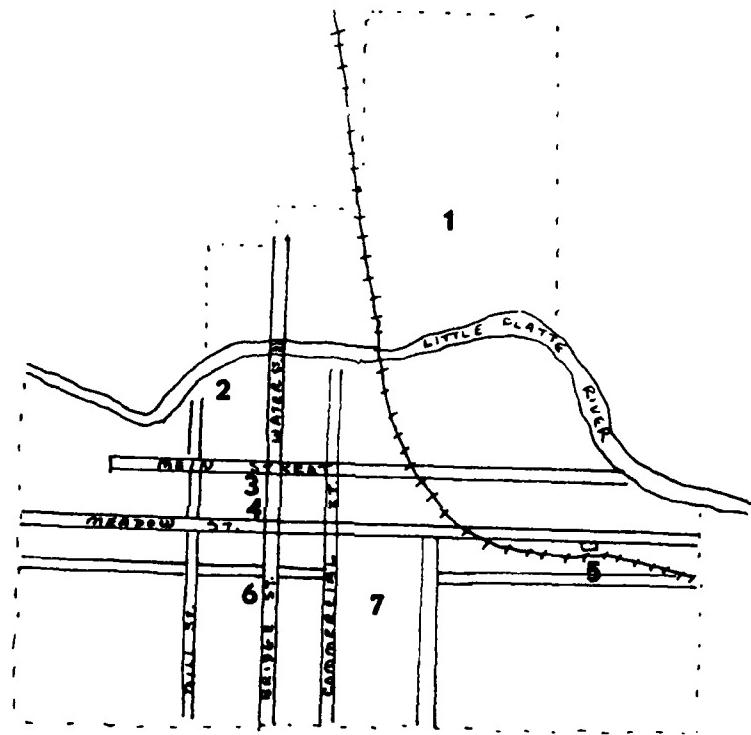


Figure 23.
Smithville 1917

1. Fair Grounds (entrance)
2. Patterson's Mill
3. Bank
4. Post Office
5. Depot
6. Hotel
7. School